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ABSTRACT

A small scale research project involving teaching writing skills to slower learning students in three different Scottish schools is the focus of this volume. Chapter 1 discusses the context and nature of the project, while chapter 2 presents teachers' accounts of their professional practices in teaching writing, including their perceptions of pupils and criteria of minimum competence, classroom methods, remedial strategies, and assessment procedures. Chapter 3 describes three case studies which examined how the participating teachers approached the teaching of writing in their classrooms, and identified whether their organization and management were consistent with the project's rationale. Chapters 4 and 5 analyze and discuss the constituent elements of an information processing model of writing and the theoretical rationale regarding classroom methodology. Chapter 6 presents two case studies integrating this theoretical rationale into classroom practice, and chapter 7 describes the final phase of classroom work, illuminating those aspects of the project's theoretical rationale that had proved problematic in Chapter 6. The final chapter discusses the success of the project, the professional demands made of collaborating teachers, and the implications for implementing the rationale on a wider scale. All but the first and last chapters include summaries, while 14 appendixes contain samples of research materials used in the study and a seven-page list of references. (EL)

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SUCCESS IN WRITING

A Classroom Study With Slower Learning Pupils in Three Scottish Secondary Schools (S3/S4)

Colin Peacock and Angela Roger

SCOTTISH CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT SERVICE (Edinburgh Centre)
in association with the
DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY of STIRLING
1984

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PREFACE

The chapters that follow comprise a report of the work of a curriculum research and development project funded by the Scottish Education Department in the context of the piloting of new courses in English at Foundation Level in secondary schools throughout Scotland and based at the University of Stirling from 1981-1983. Although the project was originally entitled *Language Skills in English: reading and writing at Foundation Level*, it was decided at an early stage to delimit the investigation to the teaching of skills in writing alone, taking account of the other language modes only in so much as they gave assistance and support to pupils engaged on a writing task.

In presenting our report we hope to reach a wide professional audience, not merely researchers, administrators and educationists, but classroom teachers of English and remedial education in secondary schools. We hope the account of our work will offer insights and support to those engaged in current curriculum developments in Scotland (and beyond) and will make a worthwhile contribution to the continuing professional debate concerning aims and classroom methodology in the teaching of language skills in English.

For those readers interested more specifically in the research methods that were adopted in the course of the project, a separate paper is available from the authors (Department of Education, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA) which describes and discusses the development of the different phases of our work and offers a summative critique of the methodology employed.

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SUCCESS IN WRITING : A CLASSROOM STUDY WITH SLOWER LEARNING PUPILS IN THREE SCOTTISH SECONDARY SCHOOLS (S3/S4)

COLIN PEACOCK AND ANGELA ROGER

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The Scottish Curriculum Development Service (SCDS) is an agency of the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum which exists to advise the Secretary of State for Scotland, Regional Education Authorities, their schools and colleges.

SCDS, on behalf of the CCC, maintains a programme of curriculum development in collaboration with a variety of other agencies and publishes reports and other information on this activity.

This publication originates in the programme of research and development undertaken as part of the government's Munn and Dunning Development Programme, in which the CCC is a partner. The research was undertaken at Stirling University's Education Department.

SCDS, Edinburgh Centre, is happy to be associated with the University of Stirling in this publication.

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I INTRODUCTION : THE CONTEXT AND NATURE OF THE PROJECT

The investigation which is described and discussed in the following chapters was conceived as a small-scale, exploratory research and development project in the context of the piloting of new courses in English at Foundation Level in secondary schools throughout Scotland following the publication of the Munn and Dunning Reports[1] on curriculum and assessment in S3 and S4. The principal area of our investigations was the teaching of skills in writing and the research was carried out with slower learning pupils and their teachers in three schools in Central Scotland.

In presenting our report we have three main aims:

- *to clarify the conceptualisation of the teaching and assessing of skills in writing*
- *to examine some of the professional issues involved in designing and implementing writing tasks in the context of our work with particular groups of pupils following trial courses in English at Foundation Level*
- *to provide exemplification and critical discussion of work implemented in different classrooms during periods of observation and development carried out in the course of the project*

The design of the project was collaborative from the outset and the research team (co-directors from the University of Stirling's Education Department and one Research Fellow who was previously Assistant Principal Teacher of English in a Scottish secondary school) worked closely throughout with a small team of teachers in the three participating schools. The schools and collaborating teachers were not chosen at random. In making the selection it was decided to work closely with one experienced teacher in each of the three schools (with a further experienced teacher acting as reserve and participating in planning and review discussions) and to encourage general discussion also of the work of the project with members of each of the English departments.

Schools and teachers were chosen in consultation with the Adviser for English in the Central Regional Education Department. In selecting schools the following criteria were applied:

- Ready support should be forthcoming from each Rector and Principal Teacher of English
- "Less academic pupils" (likely to be following future Foundation courses) should form a significant part of the school population
- Each English department should be open to new ideas and willing to develop teaching methods
- The research team should have easy access to teachers of Remedial Education within each school for advice and support.

In selecting teachers the following criteria were applied:

- Each teacher would be willing to participate in the work of the project
- He/she would be an experienced member of staff, especially as regards working with slower learning adolescent pupils
- He/she would be committed to these pupils with positive attitudes towards teaching them.

Regular meetings (approximately four per academic session) were held between the project's research team and the six collaborating teachers to discuss work and progress.

Throughout the life of the project, then, the theoretical rationale underpinning the practical implementation of work in classrooms has been discussed, modified and developed in the light of teachers' observed professional practices and comments. Participating teachers were involved in the first phase of our work when the nature of the writing process was examined and a rationale for classroom teaching and learning was developed. Before this rationale was tested in practice, all teachers of English in the three schools were interviewed by the research fellow to explore their professed current practice in the teaching of writing with slower learning pupils in S3 and S4 and the three main collaborating teachers were observed by the research fellow at work in their own classrooms with pupils following trial

Foundation courses. Complementary to this phase of interview, observation and discussion was a period in which varied teaching and learning strategies were explored in the classrooms of the three main collaborating teachers.

The final phase (excluding a period devoted to writing) involved successive attempts to implement the project's theoretical framework, developed and amended in the light of previous experience, in each of the three participating schools. Although the six collaborating teachers were encouraged to implement the proposed modified rationale with any or all of their classes, and the experience thus gained contributed insights to the discussion in this phase of the project's work, most of the important data for this final period comes from three blocks of time (four-six weeks each) spent by the research fellow as a participant/observer in the classrooms of the three main collaborating teachers, working with S4 pupils (in the main, the pupils who were observed during investigations in the previous academic session) and one final block of time (four weeks) in which she implemented work herself (with one collaborating teacher observing) with S3 pupils.

The report that follows, then, offers an introductory exposition and critical discussion of the project's theoretical rationale, illuminative accounts of selected aspects of classroom work observed in the course of its implementation, and a tentative evaluation of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of our approach. Our starting point, however, is a report of teachers' own accounts of their approach to the teaching of writing with "non-certificate" classes in S3 and S4.

Reference

1. *The structure of the curriculum in the third and fourth years of the Scottish secondary school* Scottish Education Department 1977 and *Assessment for all: report of the committee to review assessment in the third and fourth years of secondary education in Scotland* Scottish Education Department 1977

II THE TEACHING OF WRITING : TEACHERS' ACCOUNTS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

A series of interviews was conducted by the research fellow towards the end of the project's first phase of work. The purpose of these interviews was to explore the existing understandings and classroom practices of a small group of teachers of English with special reference to the ways in which they conceptualised the teaching and learning of reading and writing skills when working with slower learning adolescent pupils and how they sought to develop skills in "basic" literacy. It was not intended that these interviews should attempt to furnish data about the values, attitudes and professional practice of teachers of English in general, but rather to focus and clarify some of the issues crucial to the future development work of the project especially as regards classroom management and strategies for teaching and assessment.

Those teachers were interviewed who were currently working in the collaborating English departments within the three schools and who were teaching or had recently taught 'less-able' adolescent pupils. In addition three pilot interviews were conducted in another local school, the findings of which are included in the analysis which follows. In total, nineteen interviews were conducted. The format of the interview was semi-structured; that is, the broad themes for discussion were pre-determined, but the conversation was open for development within those areas. The interview scheme appears separately as Appendix One at the conclusion of this chapter.*

The teachers to be interviewed were sent some examples of pupils' work (in the form of audio-recordings of pupils' readings and copies of class-work scripts) for consideration before the interview to "prime" their thinking and to provide a focus during each discussion. Although these examples of pupils' work may have

* see page 30

had some influence on what the teachers chose to talk about in interview, they were originally selected by the project team to illustrate the kind of work which we recognised as being representative of that produced by 'less-able' or 'slower-learning' pupils. In addition, several teachers provided some examples from their own pupils to illustrate some of the points they wished to make. Each interview lasted about an hour and was audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed and analysed.

Since we had decided at an early stage to limit our development work to the teaching of writing, the following discussion is largely confined to what teachers said about writing, although the nature of language makes it difficult not to consider the other language modes in so doing.

The analysis presents the teachers' views in the following categories:

(a) Teachers' perceptions of pupils

(b) Criteria of minimum competence and mastery

(c) Classroom methods and organisation

(d) Remedial strategies

(e) Assessment procedures

(a) *TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS*

A picture of pupils who were likely to appear in classes following a course at Foundation level emerged from the teachers' responses. Their perceptions were mainly derived from their personal experiences with their own pupils as well as related to the apparent strengths and weaknesses of the particular pupils whose scripts were distributed to every interviewee as stimulus material. However, this area of inquiry was not intended to provide a description of a 'typical Foundation pupil' and the results should not be regarded as open to generalisation beyond the scope of the present investigation.

In discussing their classes the teachers talked about their impressions of many aspects of their pupils, not only the behaviour which they had observed within the confines of their own classrooms. In the course of the interviews, therefore, teachers did mention elements of their pupils' experience outwith secondary school, their social background, their previous schooling and learning experiences. However, although these perceptions may be relevant to the interpersonal relationships between the teachers and pupils in their individual classrooms it does not seem appropriate to produce them here because of their suppositional nature. The areas of the pupils' general abilities, their linguistic skills and their attitudes to classroom learning have a more direct bearing upon the issues which the project team wished to examine.

(i) Pupils' general abilities

Discussion about pupils' general abilities was characterised by reference to pupils' lack of abilities which was perhaps in part attributable to the fact that the pupils' scripts which were used as a preliminary focus contained a variety of errors. However, one teacher in particular (Teacher 3) argued that many of her pupils do possess some very complex language skills which are not appreciated by teachers, (perhaps because they are not perceived as 'academic'), such as reading and following the directions in a knitting pattern.

Several teachers, however, were more negative in their appreciation of their pupils' skills and believed that by the time they embarked upon a Foundation course many pupils would have reached the limit of their intellectual capabilities: "they've reached their ability level" (Teacher 6); and likewise "...it might just be their inability, that they can't go further." (Teacher 10).

It is not entirely clear what is meant by "ability level" or "ability" in language. It may be that these teachers believe

that some people never will be competent writers despite the time and effort expended in teaching them or that these teachers, given the limited time and expertise available to them feel unable to foster the development of language skills in this group of pupils. Whatever interpretation we might bring to their views a sense of frustration emerges. Some of the flavour of the difficulty that teachers feel in clarifying their thoughts on this matter can be conveyed in the extract which follows:

T.10 *You maybe get a pupil, that if he was encouraged and had individual tuition could go much further. I feel that they've only got to a certain stage in language work which is blocking them.*

Interviewer *So it's possible that they haven't had the attention they might need.*

T. *Yes, maybe. It might be just their inability, that they can't go any further, of course.*

Int. *You think there are people like that, who will reach a stage beyond which they can't go, just like us, who might not be able to get a first degree or a doctorate?*

T. *Yes, I think there must be, I think you've got to accept that in a way. We're going to have this range however much attention we try and give to certain pupils.*

(Teacher 10)

Another concern expressed by some teachers which evades precise definition is the degree of "maturity" which a pupil brings to his/her writing. For example, the breadth of experience which a writer brings to the writing of a composition might enhance his/her success. Another way in which this notion of "maturity" was conceptualised was in terms of pupils taking responsibility for their own learning. This was one of the areas in which it was hoped to provide support for teachers and pupils through the development work of the project; it was hoped to make it more

feasible for pupils to assume this responsibility by being given clearer objectives to work towards and a greater confidence in recognising the achievement of success. A similar abstract quality, that of "inspiration" was also seen to be lacking in some pupils, particularly affecting their lack of success in creative writing.

A lack of concentration or a short concentration span was another perceived problem for pupils. One teacher (13) reasoned that this was because the pupils needed immediate feedback about their work and that he could motivate his pupils by providing visible evidence of successful completion of a unit of work:

> *It could be just that you get feedback. There is the physical satisfaction of having finished a project, of having got five out of the eight assignments done, and corrected and put into the project folder. There's something there at the end of the day which the teacher and pupil can share satisfaction in saying, "We started this last week, we've now finished it, we can move on to something else."*
>
> (Teacher 13)

Several other teachers showed concern about successful motivation of their pupils in particular in sustaining their interest long enough for them to produce a piece of extended writing. For example, one teacher, referring to one of the pupil scripts presented for discussion points out:

> *I would be very pleased with that, the length of it alone. For some pupils it's just getting it all down that's difficult.*
>
> (Teacher 6)

(ii) Pupils' linguistic skills

The teachers expressed concern about their pupils' general linguistic experience in the areas of reading and writing. It was believed that pupils did not appear to read independently and therefore lacked sufficient "exposure" to the printed word. However the point was made by one interviewee that the quality

of the writing to which pupils were exposed in everyday life was as important as the quantity. Indeed examples of language use which did not conform to that taught in school were given to illustrate how pupils might be confronted by unorthodox models of English. Teacher 12 cited one popular Sunday newspaper where block capitals were used in mid-sentence, a feature she had noticed in her pupils' writing and attributed directly to this model. Such circumstances are of course outwith the teachers' control.

Within the classroom, however, the teachers normally seek to provide more instruction and direction to pupils in their writing. Nevertheless a few teachers were aware that pupils did not follow their instructions accurately. Several reasons were offered by different teachers. It was possible, for example, that pupils did not fully understand what was being asked of them. (This became an issue of central importance in the development work of the project: how to communicate clearly and carefully to pupils what was required of them in any task.) It was also suggested that pupils simply did not read or listen to instructions carefully - "They just rush into a thing without carefully reading what they have to do." (Teacher 17). Here again was an issue which was addressed at a later stage in the work of the project: how to provide pupils with a guide for their work to which they could refer in the course of their writing and against which they could check their progress. The speed with which some pupils tackled writing assignments was also seen as counter-productive. The principal reason offered for the rush to finish was that the task was usually regarded as an unpleasant one:

> *...a lot of them hate writing...they're so desperate to get it finished that they don't want to think about what they're writing down.*
>
> (Teacher 16)

While some teachers expressed their recognition of the quality of their pupils' imagination and ideas, they also referred to the difficulty pupils had in communicating their message effectively. While anyone who writes will accept on reflection that encoding thought in words is usually a complex and demanding task, it is possible to identify some particular problems which confront pupils and to guide and support them through the task. The interviewed teachers perceived obstacles at several levels. A lack of organisation and structure figured strongly, both in terms of overall design, for example in order to sustain a narrative, or in the sequencing of paragraphs and the combining of sentences. One teacher commented that the emphasis in teaching could be altered in an attempt to overcome this:

> *I think perhaps we need to start out with a much tighter structure of language or grammar and work from that, instead of starting with a novel. You can give them a variety of writing tasks based on it but you're not actually teaching them in a structured way.*
>
> (Teacher 15)

Grammatical features such as inconsistency of tenses and singular/plural agreements were referred to by the teachers and the "mechanical" skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting were also cited in the interviews as posing various degrees of difficulty for their pupils. These elements will be dealt with more fully in section (d) on remedial strategies.

(iii) Pupils' attitudes to school

An important issue which emerged from this series of interviews was the way in which the teachers perceived their pupils' attitudes to school itself and how these affected performance within the classroom. Many pupils are seen as displaying a distinct lack of interest, while others manifest various degrees of dissatisfaction. The reasons forwarded by teachers were insightful and frank: for example, often pupils had experienced consistent failure in their school careers and by S3 perhaps saw little to gain through constructive work and little value in

school (Teachers 5 and 16); some pupils' catalogues of failure might have led to lack of motivation which might even have led them into the vicious circle of reluctant attendance at school, perhaps truancy, causing further failure and discouragement (Teachers 3, 12, 14, 15); and the material presented to these pupils in English classrooms often had little intrinsic interest value (Teachers 4 and 6).

Several of the teachers who had considered these issues had also tried to overcome the obstacles, mainly by trying to provide stimulating and "relevant" material for their pupils (Teacher 6) and consciously trying to increase their pupils' motivation through enabling pupils to achieve success through accessible tasks:

> *You can increase their enthusiasm by giving them things that they can do... You have to provide them with sufficiently interesting material and sufficiently accessible tasks... There's always something in English, however poor you are, that you can do.*
>
> (Teacher 4)

(This also became a central theme in the project's rationale and it was one of the main objectives of the classroom development work that pupils should be encouraged towards identifying success on attainable tasks and be provided with visible reinforcement of success.)

However there was an undercurrent of frustration apparent in the teachers' views on their pupils. For example two teachers (14 and 17) pointed out that there was a gulf in understanding and communication between teachers and pupils. It was difficult, for instance, for teachers who, almost by definition had been successful in the field of English, to make the imaginative leap required to understand the nature of their pupils' difficulties. This is especially so when we consider that probably the majority of English teachers see themselves as being experts in the academic field of literature study, a qualification perhaps related to the more able pupil who is

likely to go on to pursue literature in critical depth, rather than in the fields of communication and language study, which might enable them to understand better the linguistic difficulties encountered by pupils at Foundation level. There is also a certain element of dialect conflict where the teacher uses a form of "Standard English" and the pupil the vernacular:

> *We're using Standard English and although I think for the more intelligent child it is easier to make the distinction between Standard English and the way they speak, it is maybe not always easy for these children... You see it in their writing... I'm not saying we should accept [grammatical errors, for example] but that maybe I forget to take that into account.*
>
> (Teacher 17)

Many of the teachers who were interviewed underlined the importance to them of good interpersonal relationships in their classes. It was recognised by several of the teachers that their Foundation classes were likely to contain the "rogues" in the school and that their disruptive behaviour can be at best trying for the teacher. Coupled with this was the not uncommon view that these classes of slower learners were somehow less important than "certificate" classes, a view sometimes reflected in timetabling arrangements, teacher distribution (such as class-sharing between teachers) and expenditure of teacher time. In addition the importance of class discipline and pupils' self-discipline emerged as a concern for several teachers. In particular they questioned the feasibility of styles of class management which involved group-work and self- or peer correction in classes where self-discipline might be lacking, despite the fact that whole class teaching is increasingly seen to be only partially effective in the face of the wide range of abilities and attitudes in any one class. (Issues of classroom management are dealt with more fully in section (c) below.)

(b) *TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF MASTERY AND MINIMUM COMPETENCE*

What standards, then, do teachers wish their pupils to achieve in writing? This question seemed to be a vital one to answer but in the event proved to be one of the most elusive. Where the teachers made their objectives explicit they were often at a

very general level. A reticence about breaking down the skills of English into its constituent elements, each with objective measures of competence is understandable since the task would be a complex one. Indeed, one of the aims of the project was to determine to what extent it was feasible to do so. Teachers may have had little incentive or opportunity before the inception of the Government's Munn and Dunning Development Programme to reflect on and discuss with their colleagues the objectives for writing which they would incorporate into their Foundation courses. Furthermore several teachers (Teachers 1, 6, 15, 17 and 18) argued that their emphasis in teaching English was moving away from writing towards talking and listening. Teacher 1 perceived the situation in this way:

> *Many of our young people are at the level of an oral culture, about the fourteenth century... Many of the skills we expect of them are not the post-Gutenberg skills but are really a sort of oral tradition which most of them are going to be living in.*

This is not to imply that these teachers did not see any merit in pupils learning to write, but that they did not expect them to need to do much writing outside of school:

> *I think that [through speaking and listening skills] this is the way they're going to communicate for the rest of their lives and I think it's perhaps nonsense that we demand that they can write a one-and-a-half page essay because that isn't related to whatever they're going to do after school.*
>
> (Teacher 15)

One measure of success which two teachers (8 and 12) said they used was that of "independence": that is where a pupil is able to communicate his message clearly and appropriately with confidence and without recourse to help from other people.

> *...it's basically an independence at whatever level they're at. If they're going to sit in a university tutorial and are frightened to open their mouths because they might give themselves away, then they haven't achieved that independence. If as a brickie's labourer someone asks one of the boys to sign something*

or to write a message and they feel, "Oh, God he's going to find out," it's the same thing. Neither child has reached that level of independence that's required of them.

(Teacher 12)

To achieve this level of independence several elements are seen as operating together: the writing should have a coherent structure; the register should be appropriate; the conventions of spelling and punctuation should be applied; and the presentation should be legible.

The teachers did not all agree on the relative importance of these elements, but broadly the priorities would be that the meaning should be readily interpreted and that the writing should be organised in sentences and paragraphs. The pupils would be expected to write in a register appropriate to context and audience and to have some facility for varying the style of their writing.

The kinds of writing in which the teachers said they would expect competence were various, but most agreed that certain "survival skills" like letter writing and the ability to fill in forms were important. Teachers seemed divided, however, on the importance of pupils being encouraged to write imaginatively or for pleasure.

There are some pupils for whom imaginative literature and imaginative situations are a closed book, so to read a ghost story and then get them to write about a ghost is a waste of time.

(Teacher 14)

Throughout the discussions it was apparent that the "surface features" of writing such as spelling and punctuation were always required to meet conventions and that handwriting was expected to be legible and neat. With reference to spelling, where wholly orthodox spelling seemed to them to be an unrealistic objective because of the magnitude of the task, teachers hoped that frequently recurring words would be consistently spelt correctly.

...words that recur most, simple words like "went" and "who", words that are always written the wrong way round.

(Teacher 10)

What the teachers between them presented then, was a large catalogue of tasks and skills which they think are important in the teaching of English, not a description of what would count as success in completing them, nor of what possible criteria of minimum competence in the tasks would be. This could be interpreted in a number of ways. It may have been that the interviewer's questioning of the teachers was neither wide nor searching enough to elicit their views on the issues of mastery and minimum competence; or that teachers had not yet clarified their objectives for their 14-16 year olds; or that they might not have formulated their aims in terms of "mastery" and "minimum competence".

Therefore it was important at this early stage in the project to try to identify and begin to articulate objectives of "mastery" which would be acceptable to the participating teachers and to develop appropriate teaching strategies to reach these ends.

(c) *CLASSROOM METHODS AND ORGANISATION*

In order to gauge the nature of current professional practice teachers were asked how they saw themselves teaching writing to slower learning pupils in their own classrooms.

(i) Prewriting

It emerged that there was no difficulty in finding subjects and stimulus material for various kinds of writing which usually arose from the literature available in the classroom. The two kinds of writing which it seems was most frequently asked of the pupils was writing to convey information, such as letter-writing or retelling a story, and writing derived from pupils' own experiences:

...where I was looking for improvement in writing skills I would probably be going for assignments more in the nature of retelling a story or an account of their own, "What I Did on Saturday", where it's easier to get to grips with the material that they're working with.

(Teacher 8)

The reasons given for these preferences were that it was believed that pupils would achieve greater success where the subject of their writing was clearly accessible and also that the teachers themselves could more readily specify criteria for success on a task. The perceived advantage of writing derived from personal experience was that pupils could feel confident about the subject-matter and could concentrate on the business of writing. There was also a reluctance amongst the teachers (as indicated above) to demand much creative writing from their pupils and they would accept such writings generously without detailed correction or criticism, feeling that their worth lay in their therapeutic value.

The stimulus material for writing tasks was largely presented in the form of the printed word such as short stories, plays (usually one-act or adapted) and poetry. Novels for instance did not appear to be used to the same extent as shorter pieces of reading. However not every piece of reading was used for writing and Teacher 1 argued persuasively against turning every reading experience into the ubiquitous interpretation exercise. Further stimulus material was to be found in television programmes, music or visits outside school, but only two teachers (4 and 6) out of the nineteen interviewed cited these sources in their current practice.

It was clear that all the teachers sought to provide a context for their pupils' writing and it was to be within these contexts that we were to try to develop strategies to overcome other perceived obstacles in the teaching of writing.

One such area of difficulty which has been touched upon in the

previous section on "Teachers' perception of mastery and minimum competence" is the articulation of criteria for success in a writing task. The teachers seemed to agree that they should be as explicit as possible about what the pupils had to do in completing a task and that this was an essential element of the "priming" stage. This would most often be in terms of quantity and the amount required would usually be fairly small, ranging from the answering of questions on a piece of reading, which pupils reportedly preferred (perhaps because of the relative brevity of the single sentence answer format of such an exercise) to the less specific two or three paragraphs or page-length composition.

Once the writing task had been outlined the next stage was to build on this framework through discussion and explanation. One teacher emphasised the importance of taking care and time over this prewriting stage in the process, expressing his misgivings about teachers "rushing too quickly into print" with the resultant danger of pupils sensing a finality about written words:

> *I think we rush too quickly into print. I would be quite happy to see it end up in print. I'm not at all persuaded that we go from that [referring to an example of a first draft] and do a fair copy. At third year level there is a big psychological barrier: that is it, they have done it. That is it finished.... Once they have finished this they lose interest and it is very difficult to stimulate them to take this through to a fair copy.*
>
> (Teacher 1)

The teachers described their practices at this stage as usually themselves talking with the class as a whole, but the nature of the support varied.

For example, it might be couched in very general terms designed to get the pupils to think about the task before they start writing (Teacher 10) or reminding pupils to vary the length of their sentences (Teacher 10). Pupils might be asked to plan their work individually (Teacher 11) or orally with the teacher

on an individual basis (Teacher 12). Another technique would be to ask the class to volunteer suggestions for vocabulary to be used in their writing: the suitability of the words would be discussed and the resulting list collated and displayed (Teachers 12 and 14). Alternatively a joint drafting lesson might be arranged where the class would work with the teacher to produce a plan or an exemplary first draft on an overhead projector or blackboard. In this way composing could be taught by example and the teacher who described this technique (Teacher 14) sees one of the main benefits in the fact that the pupils can realise that the writing is often beset by false starts and emendations and that it only builds up into a coherent composition slowly:

> *Taking everything step by step, by giving the pupils confidence to use lots of words which they haven't used before in many cases (not words that they don't know but words which often they haven't the confidence to put down). As you are writing the stuff out on the overhead they're realising that it's not just a big slap-dash thing: that everything's going slowly and that you're moving towards things. You end up with a scribbled outline and then they complete it according to their own ideas. You're saying, "By no means is that the story, that's pointers and guides..."*
>
> (Teacher 14)

Tape-recorders were also used at this stage as an aid to composition for the initial oral drafting of subject-matter. One teacher who was enthusiastic about this technique (Teacher 1) suggested that a language laboratory would be ideal for this kind of work.

(ii) Writing

Once pupils had been shown how to plan and organise a piece of writing most teachers said that they would take a supportive role while the pupils actually wrote. They would monitor the pupils' work while going round the class, suggesting improvements and pointing out mistakes to be corrected. Visual support might also be available if an overhead projector or blackboard were used in preparation; a word list on display for instance could

be a useful support.

The teachers saw their role not only as supporter during writing and informal assessor of the written product, but also one of motivating these slower learning pupils to learn through their writing; they therefore perceived their relationship with their pupils as being an important factor in the success of their teaching. It was stated that if the pupils can be allowed to feel that what they have to communicate has value and that what they write will be treated with respect, the confidence inspired in them can increase their motivation. To this end teachers believe that it is valuable to establish a rapport with their pupils at an early stage. For example: "it's very important with these kids first of all to make them feel that they are important... I put great stress on that and within two or three days every name is known." (Teacher 7)

The teachers also felt that they should be aware of how much it is reasonable to expect from their individual pupils, to recognise their "tolerance level" (Teacher 14) in terms of quality and quantity of work. This was also particularly important in relation to pupils redrafting their writing: for example one teacher might require redrafting of only a part of a pupil's first effort (Teacher 2); and another "wouldn't ask them to write it again more than once because they get really fed up". (Teacher 16)

Ready encouragement and reinforcement of success from the teacher was also seen as being a powerful motivating and supportive influence while pupils were writing, but the teachers as a whole recognised that they were often unable to distribute adequate attention amongst all their pupils in a class. Indeed these issues of classroom organisation and management were clearly important to the teachers who were interviewed and we now go on to examine them in more detail.

(iii) Issues of Classroom Management

There was an element of dissatisfaction underlying the teachers' accounts of their classroom organisation and the effective use of their time. Fifteen out of the nineteen teachers interviewed said they usually worked in the traditional manner where the whole class was treated as a unit while a writing task was set up and then they worked with as many individuals as time would allow during the writing period. (The size of classes which the teachers were presented with at this level ranged from twenty to thirty but they considered that an ideal size would be one of fourteen to eighteen pupils.)

The management of alternative arrangements (about half of those interviewed said they had experimented with alternatives) posed various problems ranging from class discipline to finding the time to organise differentiated work. One teacher (Teacher 15), for example, although finding the whole-class teaching model unsatisfactory had not organised her Third Year class around group work because preparation was so time-consuming; she did not have time for "the devising of maybe six different lessons for each class". Reservations of a different nature were expressed by teachers who were currently organising their teaching around small groups of pupils. For instance teacher 14 had found that some pupils were reluctant to submit their work for group criticism, because "some pupils don't like anybody else looking at their work."

Certainly incorporating group work into English teaching calls for radical changes from the traditional whole-class approach so that pupils might eventually form "workshop" groups using the teacher as a resource in case of difficulty. One teacher (6), who was already committed to this model of class organisation, commended this shift in focus away from the teacher as the "fount of all knowledge" and towards the assumption of responsibility for their own learning by the pupils:

I don't like the idea that they always come to the teacher..... They can go to somebody else and say, "I don't know how to do this can you tell me how to do it?" They didn't have to always come to me, but if they were stuck they could certainly come to me. In other words, the teacher isn't the fount of all knowledge...among themselves they can actually sort something out.

(Teacher 6)

Another alternative which was discussed, that of pupils working together on their writing in pairs, raised doubts from some teachers because of the unreliability of peer advice and correction.

Most of the teachers however advocated the necessity of individual instruction at times, but the practicalities of finding the time to organise and manage individualised support, diagnosis and remediation caused problems. Some solutions had been found, however. For example, teacher 8 had tried to "cut corners" by asking for only short pieces of writing and using a "postal system" of acceptance of the work and provision of feedback to the pupil. Another teacher (7) would have welcomed an opportunity to try to teach a whole week's quota of English in one morning through a blocked timetable. The most widely proposed solution by the interviewed teachers was to reduce the current size of the classes.

One important issue for the project team to address, therefore, was this one of classroom management and the effective use of teachers' time and an important element of the development work was to test the feasibility of alternative strategies for learning and instruction in the classrooms of the collaborating teachers.

(d) *REMEDIAL STRATEGIES : POST-WRITING AND REDRAFTING*

The nature of feedback and support received by the pupils once they had completed their first written draft was also an important area of exploration. In this field the teachers

(none of whom was still a probationary teacher) seemed to rely on skills which they had cultivated through their own personal experience rather than expertise which had been gained in pre- or in-service training and several of the teachers expressed a desire to learn more from "experts" about the special problems posed in the teaching of slower learners; most of them in some way expressed a certain dissatisfaction with their current practice.

In this respect the guidance and resources of the remedial staff was welcomed by the teachers interviewed. However this diagnostic and remedial help was available in the main at S1 and S2 level only. At the time of the interviews the English staff in only two schools could call upon the support of the remedial department with S3 and S4 classes and one of these subsequently lost this provision.

The picture which emerged was one of individual teachers working independently in their own classroom on writing problems as they arose in the course of each writing lesson. The problems which the teachers mentioned they tackled in this context were those which they saw as hindering effective communication of meaning and which were fairly accessible for remediation. Drawing attention to every single mistake would, it was felt, be both discouraging for a pupil and impracticable for the teacher:

> *It completely disheartens somebody who has continual marks under their words in something that they write. I would look at the work and I would think, "What is the worst bit about it that needs to be corrected?" It wouldn't be the same approach all the time, it would depend on what they were handing me.*
>
> (Teacher 16)

The areas referred to in the discussion of techniques of remediation were those of "subject, "organisation" and "mechanics" i.e. spelling, punctuation and handwriting.

A priority in dealing with pupils' writing appeared to be concerned with the subject-matter of the composition and with clarifying the intended meaning. In a few classrooms this might be a group activity, but characteristically it would be done in one-to-one consultation between teacher and pupil, "to tease out the ideas". (Teacher 14)

Often the elucidation of meaning would be related to a concern for an appropriate structure for the ideas and the organisation of a piece of writing was also seen to be a crucial area for remediation. Working on the structure might be approached through, for example, providing definitions of the guidelines for the formation of sentences and paragraphs to give pupils a framework to work around while redrafting their first attempts. Redrafting provided other opportunities for teachers to help pupils to structure their work effectively. For example, teacher 14 said he might work on a three-paragraph framework with the pupil ordering his work into an introduction, a middle and a concluding paragraph. Teacher 8 described how he might similarly establish divisions into sections and then require pupils to redraft each of these sections in turn:

> *...I would try to get them to see that there were divisions. I would get them to divide it up into sections and get the pupil to redraft one section at a time.*
>
> *I think that once the pupil and I had agreed where the sections came, I would put a numbered asterisk at each point and say, "These are the sections", then I'd try to get them to redraft the work a section at a time.*
>
> (Teacher 8)

However these strategies as outlined above required the teacher and pupil to work together intensively and was uneconomical in terms of teacher time.

There were also times when teachers would review work and monitor their pupils' progress when the pupils were not present. In this case, one teacher (6) described how sometimes she might

restructure a pupil's writing, perhaps typing out the modified script, for later comparison with the original in the presence of the pupil.

The teachers also talked about how they would deal with problems in punctuation, particularly the marking of sentence boundaries. The teaching strategies were various, ranging from "correcting" the omissions of capital letters and full stops and requiring pupils to incorporate the corrections into a re-draft or providing practice through punctuation exercises. Teacher 1 also described the procedure which he used with his pupils for improving their punctuation, through using a tape-recorder to identify the appropriate position for punctuation marks.

Spelling was another area of concern to all the teachers, but familiarity with techniques of diagnosis and remediation varied from teacher to teacher. For instance, some would talk in terms of "phonics" or "phonetic" approaches to spelling although they would not all claim to apply these theories in practice. Most of the teachers would distinguish between "careless" spelling mistakes or "slips" and genuine error, usually encouraging pupils to proof-read their own work. A few teachers would correct their pupils' spelling without comment for several reasons: so as not to discourage the pupils (Teacher 6); because the teacher was not familiar with effective techniques for improving spelling (Teacher 17); because there seemed little point in directing pupils to correct their own spelling errors through (for example) using a dictionary, because, "if they don't know how to spell it they can't look it up in a dictionary". (Teacher 15) On the other hand another teacher (7) advocated dictionary research with some teacher guidance e.g. "It begins with --, go and get a dictionary".

Several teachers described how they would proceed to reinforce correct spellings by urging the pupils to copy out the corrections and then perhaps use the words in a new context.

Other teachers would try to identify any patterns of error in a pupil's work to establish (for example) any particular sounds or word or letter shapes which were causing difficulty such as reversals of the letters "b" and "d" or "went" or "who" consistently misspelt, so that some specific practice could be tailored to the individual pupil. In addition teacher 10 advocated spelling tests for pupils who made such recurrent mistakes: by specifying perhaps five words a week to be learnt and subsequently tested, she hoped to familiarise her pupils with the correct spellings.

The teachers' responses to handwriting problems also showed some diversity. On the one hand, there was a conviction that pupils could and should be taught to write legibly and neatly. However, the outlay of time spent on producing improvements in handwriting seemed to be given unwillingly. Interestingly, even those teachers who did not accept that the teaching of handwriting was their responsibility (e.g. Teachers 9 and 13) would take the presentation of writing into account in assessing a pupil's writing.

The techniques which teachers would use to bring about improvements in handwriting varied: some might merely specify a consistency of style; others might suggest particular elements for attention such as the spacing out of letters and words; others would draw lines on the pupils' paper to aid discrimination between upper and lower case letters (Teachers 7 and 15); and another simple suggestion was to ask pupils to double-space their lines of writing.

As teachers described their teaching methods designed to improve pupils' overall performance in writing some reference was made to course books. Their principal exploitation was as a resource for stimulus material, but they were occasionally used to provide remedial exercises which were selected to provide work relevant to a pupil's diagnosed difficulty in writing. However, the exercises were often seen to be demanding and could be too

difficult for pupils to tackle without support from the teacher. In addition there were doubts expressed (particularly by Teachers 7 and 18) about the efficacy of tackling remedial exercises in isolation in that while a pupil might join up sentences, punctuate carefully, spell accurately or write neatly when engaged upon the particular task, any improvement seemed to be confined to the exercise in question and did not necessarily apply in another context.

(e) *ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES*

Every piece of writing could be regarded as an opportunity for teachers to diagnose their pupils' strengths and weaknesses with a view to encouraging them and supporting them in order to improve upon their work. As teachers described their practices it emerged that this formative assessment seemed to be undertaken spontaneously and intuitively usually on an individual basis during a lesson. This might be undertaken informally, where the teacher would help and encourage while going round the class or more formally, where pupils would come to the teacher's desk to have their work corrected. In this way feedback and instructions for further work could be immediate and directly relevant to the work in hand. This method, of course, makes obvious demands on exclusive teacher time and the number of pupils who can consult the teacher during any one class is limited.

Some reference was made however to alternative strategies for formative assessment such as pupil self-assessment and peer-correction, but these were infrequently used (by Teachers 6 and 8) and even then not wholeheartedly endorsed. For example, self-assessment was largely a matter of proof-reading and doubts were raised about the efficacy of peer-correction on the grounds that accuracy could not be ensured and that criticism might be unduly harsh from another pupil.

In discussion about summative assessment during this inquiry all of the teachers indicated that they used norm-referenced assessment for summative evaluation of their pupils, yet few were entirely uncritical of the validity of this practice; they saw little alternative, however, since rank-ordering of pupils was usually required in inter-departmental consultation and for translation into grades (A to E) required for report cards.

In the assessment of writing in particular it seems that not all kinds of writing were seen to be assessable in the same way. For example, two teachers (8 and 17) said that they would not use pieces of creative writing for the purposes of assessing writing competence, since such writing should perhaps be regarded mainly as "therapeutic":

> *...if it read O.K. you would just tick and say, "Fine".*
>
> (Teacher 8)

It was seen to be important, however, that pupils' work was evaluated and that the result should be made known to the pupil. One teacher attributed the demand for norm-referenced assessment to the pupils themselves: "(the mark) is what they're desperate to get" (Teacher 16) and another (13) argued that the pupils wanted to see some clear-cut result for their efforts no matter how encouraging or discouraging that might be. Above all, the teachers acknowledged that pupils should be provided with some means of monitoring their own progress.

(f) *SUMMARY*

As a result, then, of the data collected from interviews with this particular group of teachers, it is possible to offer the following summary:

The teachers appear to *perceive adolescent slower learning pupils* who are likely to be attending courses in English at Foundation level as having the following characteristics:

- they (the pupils) may experience a sense of conflict between the language they habitually use in their daily lives and that of the classroom

- pupils probably assume that they will be uninterested in school work and unsuccessful in completing classroom tasks

- they may have a short concentration span

- they may not attend to instructions carefully and have difficulty in understanding what is being asked of them

- they may tackle an assignment too quickly and have difficulty in sustaining effort

- they may present behaviour problems in the classroom

In *setting writing tasks* in the classroom the teachers tend to work in the following ways:

- they tend to concentrate on subject-matter derived from pupils' own first-hand experiences or on "survival skills"

- they normally expect a small quantity of writing

- they accept the need for clear, explicit instructions about the nature of the task to be tackled

- they use a variety of stimuli to encourage ideas for writing, though usually from a printed source

- they usually seek to assist pupils before they write with discussion of aspects relevant to the task (this discussion is normally between teacher and the whole class), by suggested vocabulary and by the production of (joint) plans for completion of the task

During *the writing of the first draft* the teachers appear to display the following characteristics:

- they usually offer further explanation and advice to individual pupils

- they seek to overcome individual difficulties and to monitor pupils' progress

In the course of *formative assessment* after completion of the first written draft the teachers appear to make explicit the following *criteria for success*:

- readily accessible meaning from the text
- coherent structure and organization
- register appropriate to context and audience
- mastery of and variety in sentence form(s)
- varied vocabulary
- respect for the conventions of spelling and punctuation (although this does not constitute a demand for total accuracy)
- legible presentation

Diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses by the teachers tends to comprise the following characteristics:

- either individual consultation between teacher and pupil in class or a 'postal' system of feedback carried out in isolation
- it tends to be carried out by the teacher spontaneously and intuitively rather than in accordance with a systematic pattern
- it begins by focussing on obstacles to communication and concentrates on one manageable problem at a time
- it is likely to involve management difficulties as regards the effective use of the teachers' time

Remedial Strategies tend *either* to demand intensive use of the teacher's time in one-to-one consultation with a pupil *or* rely heavily on traditional didactic approaches.

Summative Assessment is norm-referenced.

In the next chapter we examine in more detail the professional practice in this field of our three main collaborating teachers.

APPENDIX ONE

INTERVIEW SCHEME

Lead in: Thankyou for setting aside this time for the interview. I thought our discussion would be more useful if we based it on actual pupils' work.

1. Perceptions of pupils who are 'less-able' and likely to be in Foundation classes.	1. a. What was your impression of the work I sent you? b. How did this work fit into the kind of work produced in your school? Do you get better/poorer work than this?
2. Conceptions of reading and writing 'skills' together with their notions as to what constitute appropriate criteria of mastery.	2. Let's look at some of these scripts more carefully. a. What are the strengths and weaknesses here? b. How would you describe the nature of the 'problem'? c. What would be your priorities in helping this pupil?
3. Present understanding and practice of diagnosis (and remediation).	3. How would you go about helping this pupil?
4. Present methods and classroom organisation in developing 'skills' of reading and writing.	4. In what ways do you see yourself teaching reading/writing? Could you describe how you go about it?
5. Perceptions of the reasons for various pupils lacking in skills.	5. Why do you think some pupils are less successful than others?
6. Perceptions of minimum standard of competence.	6. What do you expect your pupils to be able to do by the time they leave school?
7. General (attitude etc.)	7. Is there anything we haven't talked about that you think is important?

III THE TEACHING OF WRITING : THREE CASE STUDIES

The second element of the research into teachers' current practices was a period of observation of teaching in the classrooms of our three main collaborating teachers. The purpose of the observation was to identify, as a complement to the teachers' oral accounts given in interview (reported in the previous chapter), how the participating teachers approached the teaching of writing in their classrooms and to identify those areas of their current organization and management which were consistent or at variance with the flexible classroom approach advocated in the project's rationale.

It was decided to observe the work of the three main collaborating teachers with S3 pupils following a pilot Foundation course in English. Initially the research fellow observed each class during one lesson per week, over a period of six weeks (beginning in September 1981) mainly to allow the teachers and pupils to adjust to the presence of the researcher in the classroom and for the research fellow herself to attune to the teaching styles of the collaborating teachers and to get to know the pupils.

At an early stage the pupils were introduced to the background and purposes of the research and were given an opportunity to express their concerns about their own writing, anonymously. In all five classes of S3 pupils following a pilot Foundation course, 77 pupils responded, and it is interesting to note that the majority of these pupils voiced worries about "surface features" of their writing: spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Whether or not this was a direct response to their likely experience of repeated failure in these areas reinforced by many of their teachers in the past nine years of schooling is subject to the reader's conjecture.

In the classroom the researcher did not adopt a completely detached approach but the role of participant-observer, so that she could not only listen to and observe the teacher, but could talk to and question the pupils about their work and indeed could give them help and support where necessary. In practice, this usually meant that the researcher listened and observed when the teacher was addressing the class as a whole, and circulated amongst the pupils when the teacher did so.

In the event, part of this familiarisation exercise had to be repeated since two of the three teachers left the project: one was promoted to a post in another school and the other moved on to take responsibility for a larger English department in another school. In these two cases the reserve agreed to act as the main participant in the school in question.

As a result of this first period of familiarisation in school the researcher drew up an observation schedule to assist the collection and organization of data. This schedule was not intended to be an exemplary model for the teaching of writing but one possible descriptive framework around which to organise the data collected in the classrooms. Likewise, the outline adopted for the schedule (i.e. Stimulus, Priming, Task, Write→First Draft→Formative Assessment→Redraft) should not be regarded as a strict chronological progression but as a theoretical sequence through which we might establish patterns of classroom practice observed in the course of writing lessons. The observation schedule appears in full as Appendix Two* at the end of this chapter.

The schedule also served as a convenient framework for reference in discussion with teachers, both with the researcher at or near the time of the observed lessons and with the project team in the plenary meetings. Wherever possible the researcher talked to the collaborating teachers about their plans for the units of work, and for individual lessons for their classes and their *post hoc* perceptions of their lessons; these discussions were

* see page 61

audio-recorded or summarised by the researcher in writing. In addition the collaborating teachers took an active role in the regular meetings of the whole research team in introducing and reflecting upon their own units when they were under discussion.

For this period of the research, the teachers were asked to plan and teach a unit of work which would require an element of continuous extended writing from the pupils. (It is conceivable that a "unit" might require little or no written product at all and such a unit, although interesting and valuable in the context of the Foundation development programme, would not have been directly relevant to the more limited scope of our investigation; in fact, in the first weeks of the S3 pilot Foundation course no task requiring extended writing was set by any of the teachers being observed.) The collaborating teachers were encouraged to begin to apply appropriate aspects of the rationale of the project with the help and support of the research fellow in the planning, teaching and review of their lessons; collaborating teachers had, of course, all been involved in the initial discussions concerning the project's rationale in the first phase of work (January-August 1981).

We will examine the findings of the investigation by contrasting the three different teachers' practices one with another and in turn relate their practices to the project's rationale (discussed in detail in the next two chapters) and to the main research questions to which we were seeking answers at this stage of our work. These main questions were:

- What is the nature of the tasks set by teachers which require extended "own words" writing by pupils?
- How are these tasks introduced to pupils?
- What appears to be the nature of the problems experienced by pupils during writing?
- What is the nature of the help and support offered to pupils during and after writing?

- How do teachers manage classroom activities throughout the course of the task set?

However, it is necessary first to establish each teacher in the wider context of their department's work in the Government's Development Programme and there follows a brief profile of each teacher, class, school and the unit being implemented.

Teacher A was teaching a class of fifteen boys in School A, a relatively small comprehensive school of about 600 pupils. The English department had been selected to take part in the "second line" of the piloting of Foundation courses in English.* This particular teacher had considerable experience of working with slower learning adolescents and also had a Guidance post in the school. The unit she had planned was organised around the theme of "The Macabre" and the main writing task in the unit was to write a scene from a play with a macabre plot. The period of observation was 23 November-10 December and seven lessons during this period were devoted to work on the unit. The completion of the unit was hampered by seasonal extra-curricular activities.

Teacher B, a Principal Teacher, taught a mixed class of twenty-one pupils in a larger comprehensive school of about 1,500 pupils. His department had not yet then been involved in the national development programme for Foundation courses in English, but was already taking an active interest in it. The observed unit was concerned with accurate reporting and description and was entitled "Witnesses". The central task of the unit was the writing of a newspaper report. In case B the teacher was observed over the period from 16 November-8 December and nine lessons were devoted to the unit.

* 19 schools nationally participated in the first phase of the pilot development programme at Foundation level and subsequently more schools joined on a regional basis in the second phase. Out of 22 schools in Central Region, one joined the programme in the first phase and 9 in the second.

In school C, teacher C, again a Principal Teacher in a large comprehensive school of about 1,200 pupils which was involved in the national development programme as "second-line pilot", taught a mixed group of fifteen pupils. Between 23 November and 8 December nine lessons were observed during which the pupils were given several assignments based on two texts.

It is worth bearing in mind throughout the following discussion of classroom activities that although we may be concentrating on writing activities primarily, the teachers and pupils were engaged in related talking, listening and reading activities, of equal potential importance and value.

(a) Pre-writing Activities

There was some variety in the way in which the three teachers approached the pre-writing stage: broadly, teachers A and C presented stimulus material, outlined a writing task, and set objectives for the pupils, while teacher B adopted a problem-solving approach, set a writing task and made criteria for success more explicit as the pupils' work progressed.

Teacher A had devised a checklist for the "Strange Happenings" unit and the particular writing task which was observed was the third of the compulsory elements: the writing of a short play. (The checklist appears in full at the end of this chapter as Appendix Three).* Originally the suggested time to be spent on the writing task was a block of four periods, but in practice seven lessons, four of these double periods, were concerned with this item and the proposed task was modified to the writing of one scene of a play.

The writing task was not introduced until pupils had been presented with a story and a play as stimulus material. The story, ("The Bungling Bunyip" from a weekly magazine *Look In* which had been brought into school by a pupil) was read aloud in the class by the teacher and by a few chosen pupils and elements of

* see page 62

tension and humour were the subject of some teacher-led discussion. The second stimulus was the play "The Body Snatchers" (from Groves and Grimshaw, *Into Action*[1]) which was "performed" by the pupils, reading aloud from their desks. In this case the teacher drew the class's attention to the playwrights' comic techniques such as choosing appropriate names for the characters (e.g. "Mrs Trotwell") and using melodrama.

The teacher used these stimulus materials as a model for pupils' writing both implicitly and explicitly: by allusion, in drawing attention to the author and playwrights' techniques and implying that pupils should aim for similar effects; and then a little more expressly after reading the story the pupils were told that they were going to write something "along those lines"; and then with a further degree of explicitness, after reading the play, that they were going to compose a scene from a play and that they should copy the layout for their scenes from the text they were studying, i.e. the characters' names should appear in the margin alongside their dialogue with the dialogue in the main body of the text and stage directions in parenthesis.

The pupils were given a choice of subject for their scenes from a list to be found at the back of *Into Action* (e.g. "A funeral party had just left and two gravediggers are filling in the grave, when the coffin lid slowly opens and.....") or they had the option of basing their plot on "The Body Snatchers" itself. The teacher suggested that the first two outlines (that of the grave-diggers confronted by an opening coffin and one about a highway-man's body stolen from the gallows) were most appropriate, but in fact most of the pupils chose to use the bodysnatching theme for their compositions and the teacher advised them to leave the choice of a title until after they had written their scenes. The pupils were told that they should write only one scene from a play and therefore it would not be as long as the one they had just read. There were also asked to include some "background" to the scene so that it was clear who the characters were and what part

they played, although it was not apparent at this point where this background should be included (e.g. through a narrator, as an introduction or through the dialogue).

At this stage, then, the task had been preceded by perusal and discussion of two different kinds of stimulus material and had been defined in terms of content, layout and (vaguely) length.

In setting up this writing task, then, the teacher was accepting the recommendations set out in the *Guidelines for courses in English at Foundation Level* (S.E.D. 1981)[2]: that a sequence of lessons leading towards a goal such as the writing up of a short play or scene would be a worthwhile enterprise. Likewise, in using appropriate stimulus material, discussion with the class and some reference to the play which she introduced her pupils to as a model for their own writing, she was interpreting and applying these recommendations. However, it became apparent (with the benefit of reflection on this period of observation) that at this stage, the techniques could be more fully exploited to the pupils' advantage. For example, "The Body Snatchers" was used as a model with explicit reference being made to the character-naming, the use of melodrama, the layout and the length in relation to what the pupils themselves were required to produce. In discussing the story "The Bungling Bunyip" previously, the teacher had drawn the pupils' attention to the elements of tension and humour in the plot which had added to the enjoyment of the story. These same elements appeared in "The Body Snatchers", yet explicit reference was not made to them, although pupils may well have inferred the connection. Had a more systematic analysis of the play been undertaken and directly related to what the pupils were expected to write (as the teacher did in fact do with some aspects of the task, such as the layout), then, we surmised, such a model could be utilized as an even more valuable resource.

Another area which merited special attention as the project developed was the specification of criteria for success in the completion of a writing task. In the case of teacher A the task had been delimited in terms of content (although pupils could choose from a number of options), some dramatic devices, layout and length. However, these specifications were given orally together with the references to the studied text with an illustration on the blackboard, so the pupils had to rely on remembering what their objectives were. Indeed, over the following four lessons the teacher found herself reiterating the instructions at least three times, repetition which might be seen to be uneconomical in terms of teacher time. At a later stage in the project then, attempts were made to make such instructions both more explicit and presented to pupils in a more permanent form, both in writing and on audio-tape to serve as a reference for pupils to turn to independently.

Whereas teacher A concentrated on one writing task during the period of observation, the other two teachers each dealt with several. Teacher B, for example, asked for three pieces of writing in his "Witnesses" unit, some character descriptions, together with a brief report of an incident, the report of a robbery for a newspaper and further character descriptions. The tasks were primarily problem-solving in the way they were presented to the class, i.e. the first attempts at description and reporting with little teacher support or explanation were reviewed and refined with much more support before the second attempts were made by pupils.

The first task was for the pupils to describe orally what they could see in drawings which the teacher had distributed; the drawings depicted a High Street scene where an incident had taken place (the materials used throughout this unit appear at the end of the chapter as Appendix Four).* The pupils were supported and guided in their descriptions by the teacher's questions and feedback. The teacher then summarised the main points elicited

* see page 63

during this preliminary discussion and then drew the pupils' attention to the assignments presented with the stimulus pictures. These assignments involved describing the incidents and retelling the story from the point of view of one of the depicted characters. The teacher reminded his pupils about the techniques of note-making which he expected them to use; he had already introduced these to the class in an earlier lesson and expected them to be familiar with them.

In choosing a sequence of lessons related to a common theme for his unit, teacher B was also adhering to the Foundation Guidelines. The stimulus material and subsequent discussion were also in line both with the project's rationale and the practice of teacher A. Two differences, however, between these teachers' practice have emerged. Firstly, teacher B did not at this stage provide a written exemplar of a character description although the class lesson could be seen perhaps as a kind of oral drafting. This was a conscious decision on his part, to present the pupils with the task, for them to wrestle with it initially and then to step in with support at a later stage. Secondly, the teacher did provide a brief written reminder of the task to which pupils could refer.

In setting up the second and main writing task the teacher played an audio-recording of a simulated news broadcast reporting on a bank robbery. (The recording was very convincingly produced and the class evidently believed it to be authentic.) After the initial listening the pupils were asked questions about the details contained in the "news item" by the teacher, they wrote the answers, and their responses were checked quickly by the teacher. Once again this could be seen as a problem-solving exercise: the pupils had not known that the purpose of listening to the recording was to reproduce details on the communication in writing and indeed the teacher made it explicit during the "quiz" that he recognised the difficulty of the task and that he did not expect the pupils to remember some of the details. However,

they were able to focus on these details better during a subsequent listening, having had the experience of this first set of problems, and the recording was in fact played back straight away for pupils to do this. The pupils were asked to take notes during this playback concerning the important points which would be needed in a written report of the robbery in a newspaper.

The teacher followed this up by distributing a set of the same edition of a local newspaper round the class and the teacher initiated a discussion which compared some of the salient differences between an "essay" and a newspaper report.* These differences which were highlighted (e.g. the factual nature of the writing; short paragraphs of five or six sentences; the appearance of headlines, subheads and bylines) were summarised by the teacher and could be regarded as constituting an explicit (oral) model and the reports in the newspaper itself as the implicit written model for pupils to follow in their own writing. The teacher then dictated a brief outline of these elements for pupils to use as a checklist in their writing ("1. Headline(s) a short story only needs one headline. 2. Paragraphs. 3. Facts.") and told the class that they were to write a newspaper report of the bank robbery from their notes. The teacher added that the choice of a headline should be left until later.

This writing task, then, had been preceded by stimulus material followed by discussion, a model for the writing and a checklist, which specified layout, organisation and the style of writing. In this case, the pupils made only one request for clarification of the instructions (regarding the headline) as they started to write, compared to the three in the case of teacher A. It was not of course the same class of pupils, nor was the writing task directly comparable, but it seemed that the pupils had had more in the way of explicit instructions for attempting the task and tangible reference to evaluate their own degree of success in completing it.

* see Appendix Five page 64

The observation period in Teacher C's class covered several discrete pieces of writing: a character description; letter-writing; writing scenes for a play and a report of classwork.

The first writing task, a description of the characters of a novel, was the last in a series of language tasks based on the class reader, *The Dangerous Ones*, by Vernon Scannell.[3] Stimulus for the writing and class discussion had already preceded this first observed writing lesson then, and the setting up of the task itself was in the form of a written instruction and outline on the blackboard. The instructions were to write a description of the three main characters, illustrating the nature of each character with an example of their behaviour to prove the point. The pupils were to write two sentences on each point in the outline (1. appearance; 2. family background; 3. interests; and 4. character).

The second task, which was not observed but reported by the teacher, was a letter writing assignment, unrelated to the previous sequence of lessons. The teacher displayed a model letter on an overhead projector and he led discussion about elements of layout and style. The pupils were aware that the model would be removed before they attempted their own letters. Here again, the teacher's practice corresponded to the project's rationale in as far as a model was presented to the pupils and used to elicit the elements of letter-writing in which the success or failure of the pupils on the task would be judged. However, the removal of the model while the pupils actually wrote introduced an element of testing for recall into the writing task.

The next writing assignment was introduced through the medium of a play. The pupils took parts in reading part of a short play (*A Little Patch of Ground* by Geoffrey Case[4]) from their desks. The pupils each had a copy of the text. The teacher directed the play and helped to focus the class's attention on points of

the author's technique, and the implication of incidents for the plot. However, the end of the play remained unseen and the pupils' first writing task was to complete the last scene, inferring what the likely ending would be from the text they had read and the discussion which had ensued. The pupils were only required to write three or four speeches which could follow on from the last one read. The implicit model was therefore in the form of the original text and the task had been defined in terms of content and length.

This short writing assignment could also be seen as a pre-writing exercise for the second extended piece of writing based on this same text, in that the pupils were practising the same style and layout which would be required in the second assignment. This second task (as described to the pupils) was to write and subsequently act a scene which could have taken place in the play they had been studying, had the dispute (which was the central issue in the play) been the subject of an enquiry in court. The teacher had prepared cards giving the name and a "profile" of the character from whose point of view they were to write the scene. The text was available as a model and the teacher had defined the task in terms of content and point of view.

The final writing assignment in the observation period, and also in the term for the pupils, was to compile a report of their class-work to date. They were to use their log-books, in which they had been keeping records and their folio in which they had collected their work for reference and were to include personal comments on their work. Some of the pupils were concerned to know if the report was to be assessed and the teacher indicated that the report would be included in their folio of assessable work. In addition, one pupil asked for clarification of the task, adding that he felt unable to do it. Initially the teacher responded by repeating the instructions and for the next lesson, produced an outline of the task on the blackboard. The outline specified the content of the report, and remained on the board while pupils completed the task.

Teacher C then had worked with his pupils on a variety of writing tasks both text-based and experience-based, calling for a variety of registers. He used implicit and explicit models together with discussion of them and outlines of writing tasks for pupils' reference.

Between them, then, the three teachers used literary material in the form of plays, novels, short stories, newspapers and journals, and non-literary material in the form of an audio-recording as stimulus material for their pupils' writing. Considerable pre-writing support was also given to pupils in the form of discussion between the teacher and the whole class. However, the teachers provided differing degrees of explicitness about the criteria for success on the tasks they set and used their models in several ways; as an explicit exemplar for analysis; as a temporary illustration; and as an implicit or explicit exemplar of the kind of writing which was expected. The detail in which the teachers defined the writing tasks required of the pupils and specified their criteria for success in completing a task was of particular interest in the context of the project's theoretical rationale. Through reflection on the study of the writing process, the project team had become increasingly aware of the importance of this pre-writing stage. It was therefore to become a focus of the subsequent classroom work to investigate feasible strategies for making the requirements of a task and the criteria for success on the task more explicit to the pupils and available to them while actually engaged in their writing and revising activities.

b) Activities during writing

The three teachers observed employed different styles of management and organisation during their pupils' writing periods. At the most superficial level, that of class layout, teacher A's class sat in a large, brightly decorated classroom, where the desks were arranged in groups of twos and fours and in which there was a great deal of scope for pupils to work together or in isolation as they wished. The teacher's desk was off centre at the front.

There was also a class library readily accessible. Teacher B's classroom on the other hand was very small with desks arranged in roughly a horseshoe shape with the teacher's desk set in the open end. There was little opportunity for pupils to move away to work on their own and most of the time were working elbow to elbow with each other. Teacher C had a spacious bright classroom with the desks neatly arranged in single rows. The teacher's desk was at the front corner. The pupils usually sat at their single desks but occasionally rearranged the furniture to form a large group.

The general patterns of the teachers' and pupils' activities during their writing sessions were related in some measure to this layout of the classrooms. For example, teacher A would have her pupils working individually, in pairs or in larger groups up to four and would visit the individual pupils at their desks to encourage them and monitor their progress and then withdraw to her own desk for pupils to consult her when they needed help. She would address the class as a whole infrequently, usually at the beginning of a lesson or when asked a question by a pupil which seemed relevant to the whole class's work. This was the pattern in the first writing period of her "Strange Happenings" unit: the pupils were directed to talk over ideas and work out their plot and characters on paper in pairs and the teacher provided a brief illustration of the desired layout for dialogue on the blackboard; a pupil asked for clarification of the task and the teacher restated what she wanted done for the whole class's benefit. Once the pupils had settled into this phase of the work the teacher moved round between the groups helping them to formulate their plots and guiding them through difficulties. After she had visited each group in this way she retired to her desk to work on some papers and the pupils came out to consult her.

By the time the class had assembled for the next lesson, the teacher had produced a more detailed example of script on the blackboard (which remained there during the next four lessons) to

which the teacher drew the class's attention. From then on, the pupils worked in their groups while the teacher visited them at their desks. A question from one pupil prompted the teacher to spell out the task to the class again, but in the main, her energies were devoted to informal formative assessment. The pupils responded to the task enthusiastically, discussing ideas for their scenes. Generally, when a theme had been agreed on, the individual pupils would all write similar separate scripts, but in one case at least, a pair tried to delegate these responsibilities; eventually they had to call in the teacher as referee to decide which of them "should do the thinking" and which "the writing". Once again, during this lesson the teacher had talked to each pupil about his work.

The next lesson conformed to this general pattern of differentiated work by the pupils, at different stages in their writing, supported by individual attention given spontaneously by the teacher or requested by a pupil when the teacher had withdrawn, but two further elements emerged. At one point the teacher urged one group of pupils to use another group as an audience for a trial reading, since they had completed a first draft. In addition, some pupils were breaking off from their writing to consult books in the classroom, variously for inspiration and diversion.

The following lesson brought a trial performance of pupils' scenes, the experience of which, the teacher suggested at the beginning of the next period, would help them in their redrafting. Once again she drew the class's attention to the model layout on the board. Two pupils merited special attention during this period: one had written very little and the teacher rehearsed the instructions for the task with him; another returned to class after a long absence and also required individual attention.

At the beginning of the sixth writing lesson the teacher urged the pupils to finish their writing during this period and she

continued to help and support the pupils while they worked. In addition during this class, which was close to the end of term, the teacher was concerned with the organisation and compilation of previous work.

Teachers B and C differed from teacher A in their class organisation, in particular in their preference for a pattern which involved whole class teaching followed by individual consultation, with occasional direction to pair-work; yet the styles of B and C were individual within that framework. Teacher B's style was to address the class at the beginning of a lesson, to introduce a task or to pose an additional problem for pupils to work on, then to encourage individual work from the pupils, while systematically monitoring each individual's progress and providing formative assessment in a "writing interview" before reconvening the class for a review of the lesson and a preview of the next or an overview of the whole unit.

Having set up the first writing assignment, for example, which was an exercise in description, the teacher left the pupils to settle down to the task, then went round the class to gauge their responses. He then withdrew to his desk until the end of the period when he summarised the main points which the pupils should have included in their writing and added a suggestion that the simile was a useful technique for descriptions. The following lesson began with the teacher revising the previous day's work. Then the pupils worked individually on their descriptions with occasional reference to their peers. Meanwhile the teacher assigned two peer tutors to pupils who had been absent during the previous lessons. The teacher gave some support to individual pupils, again informally, and then called the whole class's attention while he instructed them on how to use their notes for their writing. Also at this point, the teacher referred to a possible model for their descriptions, that of news broadcasts or police "wanted" posters, with which the pupils might be familiar.

The pupils then returned to their pattern of individual work. On one occasion during this period one pupil asked another (an acknowledged class "expert") for help with a spelling, and received a wrong answer, which supported the reservation about peer tutoring expressed by one teacher in the earlier interviews. However teacher B seemed to be deliberately employing these techniques in managing his class. Another example was when he used one pupil's work as a model for another pupil to illustrate a point which he was making during formative assessment.

After some time spent going round the class, providing informal, formative help, the teacher once again addressed the whole class to round off the lesson by reviewing the first task in the lesson and recapping on note-making techniques.

The following lesson saw the introduction of a new task based on the audio-recording as stimulus, requiring that the pupils write a description, this time of an incident. While the pupils began to write on this occasion, the teacher took the opportunity to distribute work they had completed previously with appropriate oral comments to supplement the written ones which appeared on their scripts. Meanwhile, several pupils asked for factual help with the task in hand which the teacher readily responded to. Having returned all the earlier written work, the teacher was again available to support pupils in their writing, and at the end of the lesson summed up their work to date and mapped out how the unit was going to develop from there.

In the fifth lesson the teacher again employed peer-tutors in an interesting way. This time he was introducing a record-sheet for the pupils to fill in for every piece of work to help them to chart their progress and also to provide him with a summary of the work they had completed. What he did was to brief a few pupils in how these were to be filled in then asked them to show several other pupils in the class how to do it. The teacher was then free to undertake systematic formative assessment by calling individual pupils out to his desk with their writing. The remainder of the

class would confer with each other as they encountered difficulties, when the teacher was occupied in this way.

The teacher began the next lesson by talking about a problem he had encountered in a pupil's work in consultation and illustrated how to help clarify a description of a place by actually drawing a plan. The rest of the lesson and the entire following lesson were spent in carrying out systematic writing interviews. The unit was rounded off in an eighth class meeting when the teacher compiled a list of the writing tasks on the blackboard and in particular praised the class on the quantity of writing which they had completed.

Teacher C, while also using the pattern of whole class teaching followed by individual consultation, preferred to intervene only when pupils asked for help, whereas teacher B imposed a more directive sequence to his consultations with individual pupils. During the first lesson observed in teacher C's classroom, for example, after setting up the writing task and the pupils applying themselves to the task of writing character descriptions, he went round the pupils at their desks to encourage them and give help where they needed it. Indeed the pupils readily asked for help and they were usually answered immediately. During this period also, the teacher found the opportunity to return previous work to pupils with supplementary oral comments.

This pattern of management continued throughout the observation period, with the pupils usually working on their own, referring to the teacher for help and guidance. The advice was usually given privately to pupils at their desks, but sometimes directed to the wider audience of the class. In the eighth lesson pupils were required to work in pairs on a piece of drama-scripting which represented the only significant departure from the usual pattern for writing activities.

By the ninth lesson, pupils had reached various stages of completion in the separate writing tasks demanded of them in this

unit and the teacher spent most of his time reviewing their past and current work, while they began on the task of writing their term report.

All three teachers then, organised their time in such a way that they could each spend time with individual pupils in a "writing interview", discussing the pupils' achievements and indicating how they should proceed. In addition, teachers A and B delegated a degree of this monitoring role to other pupils in the class. In the case of teacher A it took the form of using another group of pupils as a critical audience. In teacher B's case, however, he made more demands on his peer-tutors by appointing them to deputise for him to introduce pupils who had been absent to the task in hand and later to introduce a new task (the filling-in of record-sheets) to the rest of the class.

However, the main formative assessment was done by the teachers themselves, and as many of the teachers who were interviewed also pointed out, it was difficult to organise enough time for this activity to be satisfactorily undertaken. This clearly was an area which required more investigation with a view to testing the feasibility of alternative strategies. For example, it was possible to try to develop further the pupils' role in taking responsibility for monitoring their own work and that of their peers, or, if (as seemed possible from teachers' oral accounts and their behaviour in practice) some might not accept this delegation of responsibility, ways might be found to release the teachers from other classroom activities (which pupils could assume) to enable them to deal more effectively with formative assessment, such as in the case of teacher B.

(c) Formative Assessment

What teachers talked about during these writing consultations and what strategies they used for remediation were also relevant to the concerns of the project; whereas most of the above information was available in public form and readily observable, the

private nature of teachers' interactions with their pupils proved more difficult to take account of. In some cases, the research fellow merely observed and "eavesdropped" on conversations, at other times she was able to audio-record the dialogue, but this was largely the result of being in the right part of the classroom at the right time. A more satisfactory method was to site a tape-recorder on the teacher's desk (to record the formal conversations), or to ask the teacher to carry the tape-recorder or radio-microphone with him/her while going round the class. The circumstances in the individual classrooms dictated the method employed: for example, in one lesson, it was intended that the teacher carried the tape-recorder to the pupils' desks, but the spontaneous nature of the teacher-pupil interaction and the number of other demands on the teacher's attention hampered this. However, the following contains the flavour of their concerns, although it does not purport necessarily to show typical behaviour, merely the behaviour which was observed and recorded on particular occasions.

All three teachers encouraged pupils to redraft their work and helped them in this mainly by giving careful consideration to the first draft which the pupil had produced, making corrections, additions and written suggestions on the pupil's paper. Teacher A, for example, would usually begin an individual consultation with a word of encouragement before pointing out any weaknesses in the pupils' work. One instance of this came at an early stage, where a pupil brought out his work to the teacher's desk, not with a particular problem but to get some feedback from the teacher about his progress. She responded by praising how much effort he had obviously put into his work and then indicated an inconsistency in the layout of the script. This was one of the principal areas of concern for the teacher, that the composition should be laid out in the form of a drama script with dialogue and stage directions clearly indicated and she had drawn the pupils' attention to it and illustrated the desired layout on the blackboard. Another example of this was recorded:

P.1. *I've not put in my stage directions.*
T. *Where should they be?*
P.1. (pupil points it out) *That one there.*
...
T. *Where's the next one? Have you come to this bit yet?*
P.1. *No, I'm on that bit there.*
T. *Wait and I'll show you how to do that.* (Writes on pupil's script). *Right, that's your stage directions. Just put brackets, that's right, just after your..... your characters.*

She went on to use the original text as a model and to explain to another pupil why the stage directions should be separated from the main body of the text:

T. *...your stage direction wouldn't go on the line, it would go underneath. Do you want to look at a copy of the play ("The Bodysnatchers") so you can see that? I'll get that for you.*

...(teacher reads a piece from the text) *You have to have a stage direction here.* (Reads) *And again this would go underneath, otherwise the actor would be tempted to read that. So it just makes it easier to read...*

This teacher also dealt with several other elements of the writing task: the content; register, purpose and audience; organisation and the "mechanics" of writing. The way in which she worked on content was to read over a pupil's work and help him to tease out ideas for clarification by questioning. In some cases this meant helping pupils to formulate their ideas for plot in the first place.

The help which the teacher gave on register, purpose and audience was directed to the whole class as a result of a diagnosed difficulty common to several pupils, the device for making the narrative explicit in a dramatic script by means of the characters' speeches. She referred to the recent experience the class had had of a visit to the theatre to focus their attention on this:

T. *Most of you have got your story line pretty well shaped out. One or two of you have a bit of bother scripting it.... Most of you have been to the theatre, you've seen what it looks like,*

the fact that you've got to hear what's going on. You can't have your audience not being told what's happening; the actors have to tell some way or other either by their actions or by their speeches what's taking place. So make sure your actors tell the story...

She followed this up by suggesting a way of testing out whether they had achieved this aim:

Read it out to somebody in the next group and see if it makes sense. If it doesn't make sense, there's something wrong with it.

She was also concerned that pupils had their work organised in terms of sequence, spending time with several pupils helping them to clarify the sequences of events in their plots and using this order to organise their composition more effectively.

The surface features of spelling and punctuation were also dealt with, mainly through correction by the teacher in individual consultations. For example:

T. *Right S---- I haven't seen yours have I?*
P.4. *Just a bit. The rough copy.*
T. *Right* (reads script) *Question mark would have to come in there because it's after a question...and again that's a question.* (Teacher filled in question marks.)

also

T. (to P.3.) *That should have a capital of course because it's the beginning of a sentence.* (Teacher makes corrections.)

With one pupil the problem was a recurrent one: he often wrote 'n' in upper case and reversed it (И) and the teacher spent some time with him, encouraging him to discriminate between the correct and incorrect form and urging him to take care in the second draft.

When most of the class had produced a first draft of their play the teacher organised a "performance" of their scenes. The pupils obviously enjoyed this piece of acting and were made aware of some of the strengths and weaknesses of their work which had

become self-evident. The teacher initially praised the whole class's efforts and then indicated that as a result of the experience of performing their scenes and what had been learned from it, they would be asked to redraft and improve their work. In the following lesson, for example, the teacher directed one pupil to work closely with another to make his narrative more explicit through the dialogue. The pupil himself had realised in performance that the plot was mainly carried along through the stage directions, but found it difficult to communicate its development otherwise. The pupil-author read out his work to his listener who helped him to amend it by pointing out any perceived weaknesses.

Throughout this unit, then, the teacher tackled various aspects of the pupils' writing, as they arose in the class. She employed several techniques for helping them towards a better second draft, ranging from merely making the corrections herself to the pupils' scripts to discrimination techniques and pair-work. However, most of this diagnosis and remediation was undertaken spontaneously and likewise the remedial learning strategies were applied *ad lib*, i.e. the teacher was making judgements about the pupils' work and how to encourage them to develop their writing as their work unfolded; the assessments seemed to be largely intuitive, e.g. when the teacher made corrections in a pupil's text the amendments could be copied into a second draft, or not, without the pupil having internalised them or the teacher taking any account in assessing the pupil's achievement. This was to be an important area in future development work, to find some strategy for making criteria for success explicit in a more public and permanent form so that both pupils and teachers could refer to them during formative assessment. Furthermore, we were to attempt to devise a strategy which would help the teacher to gauge how much the pupils themselves had progressed in the course of their writing, making more effective use of the teacher's intervention.

The nature of the task or tasks which pupils attempted also had a bearing on the formative assessment procedures which a teacher used. Teacher B set several tasks in which the subject-matter was clearly specified and the outcome was to be similar for each pupil; in interviews between teacher and pupils about their work, therefore, there was very little reference to weaknesses in content, perhaps because there were no weaknesses, or because the teacher was more concerned with other matters. His main concerns were organisation, mechanics and redrafting techniques. In one consultation, for example, the teacher worked on some weak sentence construction and a related problem in punctuation and then handed the responsibility back to the pupil to improve similar weaknesses in the rest of the composition, (they were working on the original character descriptions):

T. *But these are supposed to be sentences so you need "Mr McLean is aged..." and you've got a full stop there, you need a capital letter there, right?...*

...you've got one, two, three, four pieces of information there. You've got one, two, three sentences but you can have the three because of this word here, which joins these two bits of information.

So using that as a model go and see whether you can make any changes to other bits, and then bring it back to me again.

As well as diagnosing and helping to remedy a problem of sentence construction the teacher had provided a learning strategy (discrimination between the model and the rest of his work) for the pupil to use on his own; he was also developing the feedback system by encouraging the pupil to come back to have his amendments checked. This seemed to be a feature of this teacher's more directive, systematic approach; for example, in a conversation with a pupil who was writing a description of the "High Street Incident" we find this:

T. *What street was this? Is it a real one or did you make it up?*
P. *Just made it up.*
T. *O.K. Give that (street) a name and that (shop) a name and perhaps the alley a name, and put down your*

time, what time is it? And correct the spelling of that word there...and bring it back to me.

A further example of the more systematic approach to formative assessment from Teacher B was one of his techniques for dealing with spelling errors. Pupils had a "spelling sheet" on which they noted down words which either the teacher had pointed out they should learn, or that they themselves knew they needed to have reinforced. In one instance the teacher directed all the pupils to note down several words which had been misspelt by various pupils during a lesson.

Another instance where he addressed the whole class on a teaching point which arose out of an individual consultation with a pupil was when he introduced the technique of trying to illustrate pictorially what one was trying to express in words: (the following was illustrated on the blackboard throughout; the context was the description of a bank robbery)

T. *The reason I introduced this idea of the map was because of B---- (a pupil). He had this idea here, which wasn't clear in the writing until we put it down on paper. The idea was that he (the witness) left a house there to walk up here somewhere...and there he hears noises which sound like a struggle or a fight of some kind. Now when you see the map it's quite clear that of course at that point that's all he would be able to do if...the happening was taking place there because there was a corner. He couldn't see round and therefore he had to go on here before he could see anything... when you actually put it down on the map it becomes fairly clear.*

The reason I've asked you to pause today is because when I gave it to B---- to do he wasn't sure how to present it. I want all of you to do a map to go with it.

Once pupils had had feedback on their writing they were encouraged to redraft, to incorporate any improvements which they had discussed. However, the teacher found at least one example of a pupil copying out a substantial piece of text as an intermediate draft, without any significant changes being made.

However, he had the opportunity to give her more guidance and directed her to go ahead with a final draft, which was also seen as a tidying up exercise:

P.3 *What will I do now then?*
T. *Well, do it again, with a fresh sheet of paper. Put a title to it, miss a line then do it again as neatly as you can.*

Another pupil saw the final draft as an opportunity to reconsider the neatness of his work and consulted the teacher on how to improve the appearance of his handwriting. The teacher did suggest ways to improve his handwriting, such as keeping the style consistent and writing on alternate lines to ease the cramped appearance, and enlisted the help of other pupils in the class to advise the pupil. The boy was asked to consult others in the class as to which style seemed most presentable, which he readily did and the pupils responded accordingly.

Like the previous two teachers, teacher C worked on formative assessment mainly through individual consultations with pupils. His prime concerns in his interaction with pupils was to clarify content and improve the organisation and mechanics of their writing. His approach to clarifying content, for example, was to elicit what the pupil meant through questioning and by asking the pupil (in the case of a character description devised from a text) to provide a full oral description with a view to encouraging the pupil to include more detail in writing. In relation to the same task, the teacher also helped another pupil to include details of content relevant to the task by identifying key areas of the text to refer to. In another case, where the framework for the task had been displayed on the blackboard, the teacher referred a pupil directly to that to ensure that all the essential elements of the task were included.

The mechanics of writing were also subject to comment by the teacher when pupils asked him to review their work and he would usually point out mistakes in spelling and punctuation to the

pu who would correct them there and then, or if they could not, th teacher would provide the corrections for the pupils to fill in themselves.

He with organising their work was available to the pupils in tw of the writing tasks in the form of a framework which appeared on he blackboard and the teacher made explicit reference to it wh dealing with one pupil's work: she was urged to reorganise he character description using the headings which were displayed on he board as she redrafted her writing.

In ncouraging redrafting, the teacher also referred to the need fo a final draft to contain "more information" (e.g. in the case of he character description, details which the teacher had su ested were missing during the writing interview). In ac tion, he expressed another criterion, that a final draft sh ld be "better presented", especially if the pupils wished th r work to be displayed on the wall of the classroom, as other pi es of this class's work had been. Indeed, at the end of th unit, the teacher often referred to the need to "tidy up" th r work and to present it without any of the rough work and co ections apparent.

Th teacher, then, retained responsibility for formative assess- me himself, which was, of course, supported by the frameworks wh he made available to the class throughout their writing ta s, and to which he referred when talking to the pupils about th r work.

(c Summative assessment

Da gathered on the teachers' approach to summative assessment we sketchy in this period of observation because of a number of fa rs. In general such assessment was carried out by the te hers outwith the classroom and also outwith the period of ob rvation. In all three cases, the pupils' work produced in th course of the unit was compiled into a folio and kept for the

purpose of final assessment later in the school year. The assessment was norm-referenced in one case, supplemented by a mark for effort, and the pupils were obviously keen to know what marks they had been awarded. However, the marks were not related to explicit criteria for success on the tasks, mainly because the teachers had not made their criteria explicit. This was to be a further important concern for future development in the project's work, how to formulate criteria for success in a way that was consonant with procedures for the summative assessment of pupils' writing.

(e) Summary

The pictures which emerged then from this period of observation of three teachers at work were interesting and complex. It was going to be necessary to ask the teachers to develop some of the strategies which they were already employing and in some cases to encourage changes in their practices, in order to implement in full the project's theoretical rationale, but it seemed that their current practice did not present fundamental obstacles to these changes. In many instances there was evidence that the teachers were already moving towards accepting the implications of the rationale for their classroom work.

As a result of this period of observation it is possible to provide tentative answers to the main questions we were asking at this stage in our investigation:

- in the classroom work observed, a range of tasks was being set for extended writing, both literary and dramatic in the form of character descriptions and scenes for acting, but also more formal and objective tasks like letter writing and simulated newspaper reports
- considerable help and support were being provided by teachers at the pre-writing stage in the form of written and audio-stimuli (which often acted as implicit models of success), written instructions and frameworks from the teacher, and

whole-class questioning, discussion and instruction

- as anticipated in the earlier interviews, pupils' difficulties in writing were being informally categorised by teachers under the headings of (i) the communication of meaning (ii) the organization of subject-matter (iii) appropriateness of style or register (iv) sentence construction (v) "mechanics" (including spelling, punctuation and presentation)
- considerable help and support were being offered to pupils by teachers as pupils wrote their first and subsequent drafts. This help took the form of references to earlier models and frameworks as well as whole-class teaching points which emerged from individual difficulties; use of peer tutors and peer audience; individual interviews between teacher and pupil to identify success and suggest or demonstrate improvements; strategies to improve spelling and handwriting; the correction of spelling and punctuation mistakes by the teacher
- in the realm of classroom management all three teachers showed flexibility in their organization of the work of the class although there were clear differences in teaching style; two teachers tended to respond intuitively to pupils' difficulties when offering help, whereas the third was more systematic in setting objectives and checking for success; all three teachers adopted an individualised approach to pupils' difficulties which involved some kind of consultation at the teacher's or pupil's desk; all teachers accepted (to different degrees) the need for individual, small group and whole-class teaching and learning.

Several questions remained to be examined in our subsequent development work in classrooms, but before embarking on this it is important to present and discuss in more detail the theoretical rationale that has already been referred to in passing and which underpinned the work of the project. This, then, forms the subject-matter of Chapters Four and Five.

References

1. Groves, Paul and Grimshaw, Nigel *Into action* Edward Arnold

2. Scottish Education Department *Syllabus and assessment guidelines: English at Foundation Level* February 1981

3. Scannell, Vernon *The dangerous ones* Arnold-Wheaton

4. In: Self, David & Bethell, Andrew (eds). *Power* Hutchinson/Thames TV,

APPENDIX TWO

Observation Schedule

Date:

Time:

School:

Notes:

Recordings made:

Teacher discussion:

Pupil Discussion:

Lesson outline:

Resource materials:

Writing task(s):

Stimulus - how are tasks presented?

Priming - how is the task set up?

Task - how much do teachers expect?

i) final objective

ii) content

iii) enabling

Write

FIRST DRAFT

Formative Assessment

SECOND DRAFT

APPENDIX THREE

'Strange Happenings'

Checklist

A. You must complete the following items for your unit.

1. Witches' spell
2. Horror story
3. Play
4. Reading study unit ("The Wild Children" from *Thirteen Weird Tales*)
5. Poem
6. News Report
7. Letter
8. Film Poster
9. Introduction
10. Index
11. Personal Assessment

B. You may also select from the following items:

1. Reading study unit (*Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*)
2. Interview
3. Map
4. Book cover
5. Menu
6. Sports Report
7. Reading Study Unit (*Death to all Dragons*)

Suggested time for each item

A.	1.	2 periods	B.	1.	4-5 periods
	2.	4 "		2.	2-3 "
	3.	4 "		3.	2 "
	4.	4 "		4.	4 "
	5.	4 "		5.	2-3 "
	6.	4 "		6.	4 "
	7.	4 "		7.	2-3 "
	8.	4 "			
	9.	2-3 "			
	10.	1 "			
	11.	1 "			

APPENDIX FOUR

WHAT HAPPENED?

THERE ARE SEVEN PEOPLE IN THIS PICTURE. Three of them are policemen, but who are the other four? Make up names for them and then write a description of each of them

- the name you have made up,
- the man's occupation,
- a complete physical description,
- what you think his age is,
- what he is wearing (you can make up likely colours).

SOME KIND OF INCIDENT HAS TAKEN PLACE which has caused the police to be called.

- Where has the incident happened?
- When has the incident happened?
- Write a story describing what you think has taken place.

NOW WRITE THE STORY as if you were one of the shopkeepers.

Newspaper cutting distributed to class after they had written their own reports

ICE-COOL BANK RAIDER STROLLS OUT WITH £3500

A man escaped with £3500 from an Edinburgh bank after passing a note to a teller claiming that he had a gun — and the raid on the Bank of Scotland, 69 George Street, yesterday afternoon was over so quickly that customers and other staff did not realise what was happening.

After taking the money, the robber, who had made no attempt to disguise himself, calmly strolled out and walked away down Frederick Street towards Young Street.

He was followed by a member of staff who eventually lost him in the crowds.

The raid took place around 2.40 p.m. when the man passed a note across to a woman teller. It claimed he had a gun, although no weapon was seen.

The man demanded that she hand over cash and the teller gave him £3500 in mixed notes.

The man was aged around 40, 5ft 8in, of stocky build, with brown hair receding to the point of baldness. He was wearing a red polo-necked sweater and a khaki anorak with a zip front.

Police are appealing for witnesses.

Drawing used for further character descriptions

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

IV THE TEACHING OF SKILLS IN WRITING : AN ANALYSIS

One of the main initial aims of the project was to clarify the conceptualisation of basic skills in reading and writing (to be limited at an early stage in the project to writing alone) and to apply the model we had developed to teaching strategies and assessment procedures implemented in the course of our classroom work. It is an indication of current wide-spread interest in the nature of the writing process and the teaching of writing in schools that a number of important books were published in the course of the life of the project which influenced our thinking (for example Gatherer 1980, Applebee 1981, Frederiksen and Dominic 1981, Frank Smith 1982, Spencer 1983, Harrison 1983). It is the purpose of the present chapter, therefore, to offer an overview of different possible approaches to the conceptualisation of the writing process and to discuss in more detail the model that seemed the most appropriate in the context of our own project especially in the light of the interviews and classroom observation reported in the previous chapters.

(a) Speech and Writing

It is tempting to think of writing as being simply "speech written down"; if reading is "a kind of listening with a visual rather than an aural input"[1], then writing can be conceptualised as "a kind of speaking" with a visual rather than an oral output. If such a view is adopted, then it is understandable that difficulties in writing should be conceived as essentially difficulties of transcription, that is, problems associated with transferring the linguistic message "inside the head" of the writer on to the page by means of conventions of spelling, punctuation and print. Considerable evidence now exists, however, to show convincingly that such a simplification is untenable.

A helpful and accessible summary of the differences between speech and writing is presented in the SCOLA publication *Hand in your Writing* (COPE).[2] These main differences are:

- unlike most spoken contexts, the writer/reader do not share the same physical setting; few direct references are therefore possible

- the writer has no guarantee that the reader brings the same shared understandings and assumptions to the processes of communication and he/she cannot probe for information as in a face-to-face situation

- writing is not supported by non-verbal aspects of communication such as facial expression and gesture or paralinguistic features such as emphasis and intonation which are essential to most spoken contexts

- writing is a sustained act of communication; the writer has to maintain in many contexts an extended flow of language which is not a characteristic of most spoken encounters

- the writer is expected to edit-out certain features of speech like digressions, repetitions and asides which are acceptable and normal in unrehearsed speech

- the writer has to be more explicit than in most spoken contexts; he/she has to 'edit-in' certain lexical and syntactic features and construction has normally to be tighter.

Frank Smith (1982) also contrasts the marked differences in speed between oral communication and writing.[3] Compared with speech, writing is "painfully slow" and consequently thought has somehow to be slowed down to accommodate itself.[4]

(b) Categories of Writing

Considerable work has also been done in recent years to clarify and categorise different kinds of writing, undertaken in different contexts, for different purposes and audiences. The most widely known and probably the most influential in the school system is that developed by Britton and others (1975), using the terms transactional, expressive and poetic to categorise functions in writing (from the viewpoint of the writer) and categorising a pupil's perceived audience in writing in terms of self, the teacher, a wider known and an unknown

audience. Other frameworks can be found in Cooper and Odell (1977) where the categories are based on a more traditional rhetorical framework, in Applebee (1981) under the ding "Uses of school writing" and Gatherer (1980) using tegories of language functions derived from M. A. K. Hallida A check-list of writing activities under three headings - (Mainly for self, (ii) Mainly for and to others - identifia e audience - and (iii) For self and others - is also to be foun n the *Guidelines for Foundation Courses in English*: App ix II (SED 1981). It seemed appropriate in our context to ept the framework suggested by the guideline document for ndation courses in English with which our collaborating te ers were becoming familiar.

Applebee (1981) also introduces the additional ca ory "Writing without composing" which is glossed as "mechanical es of writing". This category includes such classroom sks as multiple-choice and short-answer exercises, copyin dictation and translation. His own research study based pa ly on extended observation in two American high schools dicated that an average of 44% of observed lesson time inv ed some kind of writing activity, but that those activitie were dominated by "mechanical" and "informational" uses f writing (24% and 20% of lesson time respectively); inform ional writing comprised in the main of note-taking. On 3% of observed lesson time was devoted to longer writing equiring students to produce at least a paragraph of cohere text.[5]

These findings are similar to Spencer's in his stu of writing in a representative sample of Scottish secondary s ols (1983). Although he found much variation in the amounts ac lly written by individual pupils in different schools in vario categories of writing, *overall*, he concluded, about half of w is written in school appears to be copied or dictated and abo one quarter apparently consists of short answers (single sente s or blank filling). The remaining quarter is accounted for continuous writing in the pupils' own words, but more than ha of this category seems to be short (perhaps a few lines or per task).

Almost all continuous, extended, "own words" writing (that is, of more than one jotter's page in length) appeared to be done in [illegible] although even in this area, in the week of the project's survey, 70% of the pupils involved did not appear to write more than one page of continuous writing in any task.[6]

It was in this apparently neglected field of continuous, extended "own words" writing that we intended to focus our own classroom observations and developmental strategies. We did not, however, intend to define or determine in any way the nature of the writing tasks to be set as regards context, purpose or audience. Such decisions would be left to the discretion of the teachers collaborating in our classroom work.

(c) The Nature of the Writing Process

It is now accepted that writing is not simply "speech written down", nor is it a single entity or set of skills that can be learned and then applied in a variety of circumstances or to a range of subject-matter; people write for varied purposes and written forms will also vary in accordance with changing contexts and audiences. The conceptualisation of the writing process itself, however, remains problematic. What cognitive processes are involved when a pupil plans, drafts and revises a classroom writing assignment? What "skills" both manifest and covert must a pupil master to compose and communicate a "message" in written form? We would claim no simple answers to these questions, but the remainder of this chapter offers a description of the model of the writing process that was eventually adopted in the context of the present project together with an explanation of how our choice came to be made.

Scardamalia (1982)[7] has identified three distinct approaches to the teaching of writing in schools, each based on different assumptions about the nature of the writing process. The two dominant classroom modes she terms the "sub-skills" and "holistic" approaches to writing. The "sub-skills" approach accepts that the writing process can be broken down into discrete, identifiable elements and taught as separate skills; the eventual goal is that these skills will be "re-assembled" in

the course of a continuing programme of learning directed towards eventual total mastery of all forms of writing. The "holistic" approach, on the other hand, assumes that all aspects of the writing process are inter-dependent; although relevant skills can be identified, none can be taught effectively in isolation. The total communicative context is of prime importance and given an appropriate classroom environment pupils will develop appropriate skills intuitively and incidentally. Whereas the first approach - the sub-skills - accepts the importance of deliberate classroom teaching and planned goals, the second - the holistic - accepts the greater importance of pupils' development and "growth" and gives the teacher a more delicate and self-effacing role.

The third approach identified by Scardamalia, which underpins her own work with colleagues in Ontario(OISE), she terms a "cognitive" approach; this approach seeks to reconcile the differences apparent in both earlier rationales. It is based on attempts to understand the cognitive processes which appear to go on in the act of writing and it accepts that these different processes can be identified and made more effective as a result of explicit teaching. In this respect it accepts the principles of the sub-skills model, but a cognitive approach, she argues, also recognises the importance of a *system* of inter-related skills. Whereas the sub-skills approach identifies separate elements of the writing process and seeks to teach them in isolation, the cognitive approach recognises that the relevant mental processes must function together as part of a system within a communicative context; consequently teaching activities must seek to preserve the system intact (as in the holistic approach).

In the context of the work of the present project, the adoption of a holistic approach to the teaching of writing was not appropriate; from the outset we had undertaken to investigate the application of analytic, systematic teaching methods to the learning of skills in writing. Initially, though, a sub-skills

approach appeared appropriate and intellectually attractive. However, serious difficulties were encountered in our investigations and discussions which dissuaded us from adopting this model in practice.

As Spencer (1983) indicates, a sub-skills model of the teaching of writing is perceived by teachers of English in Scotland as a discredited rationale.[8] It is associated with a traditional classroom methodology which concentrates on de-contextualised "surface features" of writing and identifies aspects such as spelling, punctuation, sentence and paragraph construction, and stylistic devices for systematic didactic instruction. There still exist many textbooks which reinforce this approach and, as our interviews and discussions with teachers indicated, there appears to be little current faith in their efficacy. Consequently it seemed important that we were likely to encounter negative attitudes to a sub-skills approach as such from practising teachers, especially the most articulate and influential, because of prior professional experience. This resistance was likely to be strengthened by the fact that the *Guidelines for Foundation Courses in English* state that although there is a place for the teaching of techniques in developing competence in writing, "the need for these language skills will arise *out of the contexts* of the (Foundation) course". The concept of language that is presented in that document is described as an "organic view" and the model of language acquisition it accepts "suggests that linguistic competence develops in the context of experiences that contribute to the learner's personal growth". Although these recommendations do not explicitly align the Guidelines document with either a "cognitive" or a "holistic" view of writing development, there is clearly little encouragement to teachers to adopt a "sub-skills" approach.

Yet, as stated above, the sub-skills model does offer certain intellectual attractions. Spencer (1983)[8] implies that the failure of the model in the United Kingdom derives from two inherent weaknesses - (i) that the model of writing skills

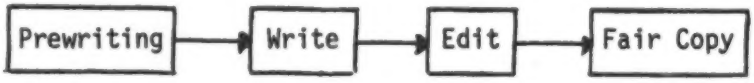
adopted in the past rests on a "common sense" analysis which emphasised surface features of the written product at the expense of cognitive process and (ii) the classroom methodology associated with the model is that of unsuccessful, traditional didactic teaching. The work of Donald E. P. Smith[9] and his associates at the University of Michigan (1976-78) demonstrates, on the other hand, that a sub-skills model can be underpinned by a coherent and convincing theoretical rationale, can take account of the total communicative context and the inter-relationship of identified skills, and can exploit a wide variety of teaching strategies. Their work and publications initially influenced our own thinking about the nature of writing and contributed significantly to the development of the classroom methodology discussed in detail in the next chapter.

None the less, the models of linguistic communication proposed by the Michigan team are intricate and elaborate and the teaching procedures advocated exceptionally thorough and systematic; from our own prior professional experience (reinforced by our interviews with and observations of teachers in our collaborating schools) we were convinced that too great a gap at present exists between the nature of current thinking and professional practice of teachers in Scotland in this field and a radical, innovatory sub-skills approach. The fundamental changes that would be needed in professional thinking and practice to bring about a successful match between theory and practice using an innovatory sub-skills model would be too great. As ensuing description and discussion of our own developmental work in classrooms indicates, as it was, our recommendations for classroom management and teaching strategies put considerable demands on our collaborating teachers at a difficult time of rapid curriculum change and it did not seem reasonable, given also our limited time and resources, to ask any more of them. This is not in any way to disparage the professional skills of our group of experienced teachers (or their colleagues elsewhere in Scotland), but rather to accept the importance of cultural differences and traditions in the teaching of writing in schools.

The model, then, of the writing process that underpinned our later classroom work was a cognitive one, which we believe to be much more in keeping with current Scottish professional thinking and practice in this field. The model developed in our work is similar to that described by Spencer (1983) under the heading "Writing as an information processing problem".[10]

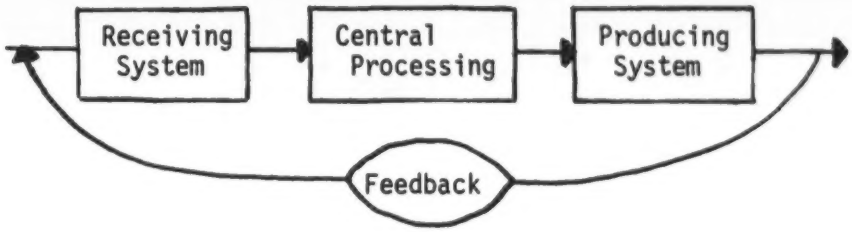
(d) An Information Processing Model of Writing

Traditional thinking about the writing process can be represented thus:



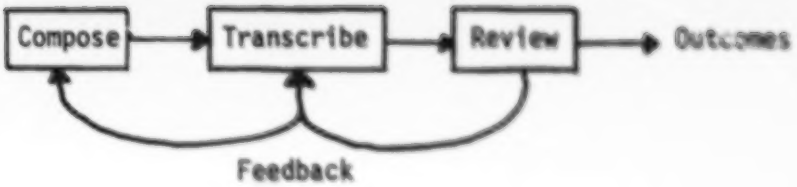
Writing is viewed as a linear sequence of events; the writer begins by planning and reflecting on his/her subject-matter, then settles down to write; once the writing is completed, he/she checks for errors, makes improvements to ensure greater clarity and readability, and then completes a final fair copy. However, reflection quickly indicates that the model is unsatisfactory. In the first place, the model takes account of extended "own words" writing alone; the majority of classroom writing tasks, it appears, require only copying from blackboard, textbook or teacher's dictation and this kind of writing requires no phase of planning or reflection. Secondly (and more importantly), the notion of the linear sequence in writing is an illusion, no matter what the task. There are constant interruptions between each phase and constant movements back and forth between the phases identified in the model as the writer proceeds towards his/her final goal; he/she is constantly reflecting, writing, checking, altering words and phrases as the written message develops.

At a higher level of generality Donald E P Smith (1976)[11] presents a more convincing information processing model:



Whatever the input (words copied from a blackboard, a paragraph dictated by the teacher, or silent language composed "in the head" of the individual writer) information is received by the brain, processed and translated by means of the "producing system" into written symbols - the marks that appear on the page; built into this process is the notion of constant feedback which continuously influences and alters the nature of the developing activity. As teachers will recognise, language copied from textbook or from dictation may move from the receiving to the producing system with little evidence at all of the influence of "central processing" (i.e. reflection or understanding) having taken place at all. The feedback system operates in such tasks (often ineffectively) simply to check the surface features of spelling and punctuation. As Smith (1976) indicates, writing presents special difficulties to the learner in the context of language acquisition because it is a "cross-mode" task. Except in the case of copied print, where a pupil writes what he/she *sees*, writing involves the translation of what is *heard* (either the voice of the dictating teacher or the silent voice of the writer "inside his/her head") into what is *seen* (i.e. the symbols of print).

Accepting that the focus of our own interest lies in the pupil's attempts to produce extended "own words" writing, we believe the following model in Frederiksen and Dominic (1981)[12] is more concrete and explicit:



"Composing" involves the activities of planning and rehearsing the content of the message to be communicated in written form, of finding the appropriate words and grammatical structures; "transcribing" involves the motor-skills of creating the actual symbols on the page by means of pen, pencil or keyboard and the command of orthographic conventions (e.g. spelling, punctuation, paragraphing); "reviewing" involves the editorial skills of checking for errors, seeking improvements to the clarity of the message being conveyed, to the physical lay-out of the script and to literary style; review "feedback" is presented as a constant process affecting all stages of the act of writing, the reformulation of the composed message and the efforts to translate this message into a written script.

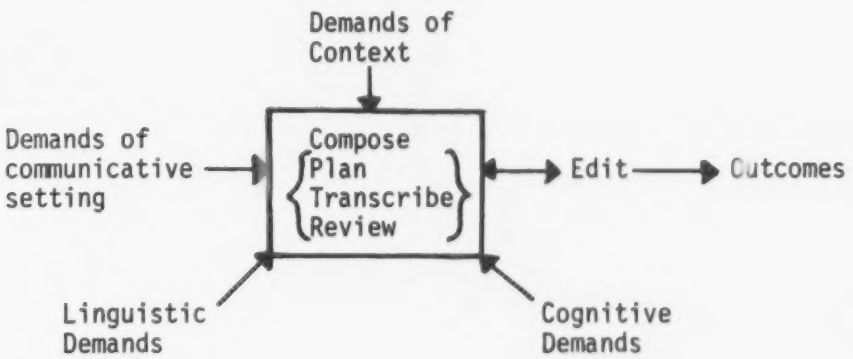
Each of these three main areas - composing, transcribing and reviewing - are now considered in greater detail, together with the different demands placed on the writer as he/she seeks to process and give form to the message he/she wishes to communicate as a written text.

(e) Composing

The term "composition" when applied to classroom writing still tends to be interpreted as signifying the final written product, something that has been "composed" and is ready for the teacher to assess or "correct". By using the term *composing* in this section we seek to focus attention on the act of composition - what goes on "inside the head" of the pupil before or while he/she is producing the marks on the page that constitute the written message. In particular it is important to take account of the different demands or constraints placed on the writer in

the act of composing which have to be overcome if a successful written product is to be achieved. Discussion earlier in this chapter indicates that overcoming these constraints involves more than the writer simply finding appropriate words to convey his/her message.

Following Frederiksen and Dominic (1981)[13], we may represent these demands or constraints on the writer in the act of composing a written text as follows:



It is important to emphasise that for the experienced writer the act of composing represented above is not a discrete activity that is sequentially connected to transcribing and reviewing. The three activities are likely to be inter-mixed and inter-dependent; the writer is continually composing, writing and checking what has been written. But in formulating a message and giving it expression in written language, the writer must possess the necessary "skills" to enable him/her to overcome the four principle kinds of constraints represented in the diagram - cognitive, linguistic, contextual and communicative setting.

The *cognitive* demands of composition are apparent. In order to compose a message, the writer must have "something to say"; he/she must be able to understand the content of what is to be communicated, must be able to recall it and organize it in an appropriate way; if this is not the case, the act of composing

and expressing must at least help the writer *towards* a better understanding or a more clearly organized representation of his/her subject-matter. ("How do I know what I think till I see what I write.") As Frank Smith (1982)[14] indicates, there can be no precise distinction between the cognitive and linguistic demands of writing, because each aspect depends on the other. Composition does not consist of these two separate, independent parts - "ideas" (thoughts, content) and "expression" - because "meaning is made manifest in its expression..... As a manifest reflection or consequence of anything in the mind, idea and words must come into existence together".

The *linguistic* demands of composition are probably underestimated in their complexity. It is generally recognised, of course, that the writer has to find the "right" words and put them "in the right order", but our present greater sensitivity to the differences between speech and writing (discussed earlier) indicate that the inexperienced writer cannot rely on his/her intuitive knowledge of spoken language when he/she formulates a message to be conveyed in written form (except for very informal purposes). The writer does not need merely to exploit his/her "language store" gathered from prior experience of speech contexts; he/she must understand how written discourse is put together, what is involved in different "genre schemes", what devices can be used to produce cohesion in the final written product. In brief, the writer must develop a "grapholect" appropriate to written texts, just as he/she has developed at an earlier age a dialect (regional, social and personal) for the purposes of spoken communication. The experienced writer has at his/her command a range of written registers for different purposes and contexts which will be used intuitively and unreflectingly as the occasion demands.

The nature of the language chosen to convey the writer's meanings - the actual choice of words and the sentence and paragraph structures - will depend very much on what is appropriate to the *communicative setting* of the writing. What

kind of writing is it? What is its purpose? What is the point of view of the writer? For whom is it written? What is the register to be adopted? As indicated earlier, Britton et al. (1975)[15] have alerted us to the importance of different kinds of perceived audience in a child's writing development and present different degrees of formality in conceptualising different categories of audience (from "self" to "unknown audience"). The notion of audience is important on both the affective and the cognitive dimensions of the communicative context; the child perhaps needs to write for a "warm" and trusted adult who encourages and responds to what is written, but the writer also needs to make the necessary cognitive leap in order to understand or at least hypothesise what the audience for the writing does or does not already know. As Frank Smith (1982)[16] indicates, children seem to experience considerable difficulty in deciding how much detail to include in their writing, and they often leave out detail that is critical and put in detail that may appear to the adult reader irrelevant.

The fact that classroom research[17] in the United Kingdom and North America has shown that by far the greater part of school writing is produced by pupils for a teacher who is perceived in the role of "examiner" to test the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge is not encouraging in this respect. There is little need for the inexperienced writer to make his/her final written message explicit and clear, when he/she intuitively recognises that the teacher who will read the script already possesses a detailed understanding of its content and will be able to predict, anticipate and "read between the lines" as he/she reads what the pupil has written. An essential problem for all writers to overcome (but one that is especially difficult for young and inexperienced writers) is our readiness to take for granted the knowledge and understanding we ourselves possess and our often unreasonable expectation that our intended audience will share these meanings, being ready to infer, and predict (as is the case in most informal spoken contexts between

child and parent, sibling and friend).

Contextual constraints are of particular importance in a school setting. The physical environment of the classroom including the presence of the teacher and other pupils may not be conducive to planning and composing a piece of extended, "own words" writing and frequently pupils have to overcome constraints of time, working to deadlines or being interrupted by lesson bells and intervals. Almost certainly the teacher will communicate to the class explicit (and sometimes covert) rules about the requirements of a particular writing task, what is being looked for in the way of content, lay-out and presentation of work. The pupil has to learn what is required of him/her and how best to "please teacher". In the secondary school in particular these problems can become intense as pupils move from classroom to classroom and from teacher to teacher.

It is clear that viewed in this light, when we consider the constraints that need to be overcome by the young, inexperienced writer when he/she seeks to compose the message that will eventually take written form, we must accept that the "skills" required of him/her to meet these demands, even before a word is actually written, are daunting. In addition McLeod (1982)[18] argues that there may also exist a fundamental intrinsic conflict in the minds of some writers when they attempt to resolve these problems. On the one hand, there is a need for a writer to express his/her own understanding with a sense of being in control of his/her own knowledge and language and getting satisfaction from communicating a unique message, while, on the other, there is a need to accept conventions, communicate successfully to different kinds of audience and anticipate a reader's expectations. McLeod believes that this internal conflict may be particularly acute for children whose spoken dialects are widely divergent from standard written forms and whose perceptions of life are markedly different from the readers who will assess and judge what they have written.

(f) Transcribing

Transcription is the process whereby the message that has been formulated or "composed" is translated into written form. In order to effect this translation, the message has to be mentally rehearsed by the writer and held in short-term memory; he/she must demonstrate a command of the conventions of spelling, punctuation and textual presentation; and he/she must have mastered the motor-skills necessary for a handwritten or keyboard text.

Frank Smith (1982)[19] identifies a further source of possible dysfunction for the beginning or inexperienced writer if the processes of composition and transcription both demand equal attention from the writer. Ideally, the skills of written transcription should be a set of automated, unreflecting sub-skills. If the writer has to struggle to control movements of the pen across the page, has constantly to pause over details of spelling and punctuation, then clearly attention and effort are likely to be diverted from the processes of composition. Donald E P Smith (1976)[20] also emphasises the importance of "sub-routines" or sequences of automatic, low-level responses upon which are built more sophisticated responses; examples of sub-skills essential to written transcription would be the writing of letter-strings, responding unreflectingly to punctuation signals, and to "function" and "transition" words; the over-learning of such sub-routines are essential, he argues, to the confident mastery of written forms. It is also important to observe in this context that aural dictation from a teacher or copying from blackboard or textbooks are acceptable methods of developing fluency in transcription skills. An insistence by teachers on extended, "own words" writing in the classroom may put an unreasonable processing load on the shoulders of some pupils.

Britton et al. (1975)[21] draw attention to the importance of the amount of "content" that can be held in focus in the mind at the

time of writing and we commented earlier on the marked and inevitable differences in comparable speeds in most contexts when we produce a spoken as opposed to a written text. According to Britton et al. only a limited number of words can be retained "in the head" of the writer while actually writing and there are likely to be clear differences in this capacity between beginner and fluent writers. Frank Smith (1982)[22] argues that for many people there may be very little mental rehearsal of the words themselves before they are actually written - that the words "just flow from the end of the pen (if they flow at all)". But mental rehearsal or "self-dictation" may nevertheless be an important initial transcription skill for the beginner or unsuccessful writer:

> *Often the writing and the inner speech appear to be concurrent; it is not clear whether we are "reading" what we have written as we are writing or are writing to our own dictation. Perhaps any of the alternatives is possible and we switch from one to another, sometimes the hand leading the inner voice, sometimes the converse, and sometimes the two proceeding in tandem. And sometimes, for some people at least, the composition can be entirely focussed on the hand alone, and there is no inner voice at all.*

Peters (1967)[23] has clarified the essence of spelling difficulties for the young or unsuccessful writer. Whereas reading a text involves the child in moving from the unknown (the symbols on the written page) via the context (of, for example, a story) to the known (that is, the understanding of the meanings involved), the act of spelling in producing a written text involves a process that is diametrically opposed; the child has to move from the known to the unknown. That is, by means of the processes of composition, the child has a grasp of what he/she "wants to say" and may possess the language silently rehearsed "inside his/her head", but the actual spellings of the words in question are unknown. The writer has to "image" the words in question or "sound them out" and can consequently be faced by a variety of possible combinations. There are clues in the sounds of the words, but in English these sounds may be written in many ways. The experience of wide voluntary reading

does not necessarily ensure that a child looks closelt the structure of words, at recurring letter patterns or dlops an effective visual memory to ensure quick, accurate rec. When reading, it is possible for the child to recognise wh words or groups of words and to be involved totally in recoructing the text's meaning.

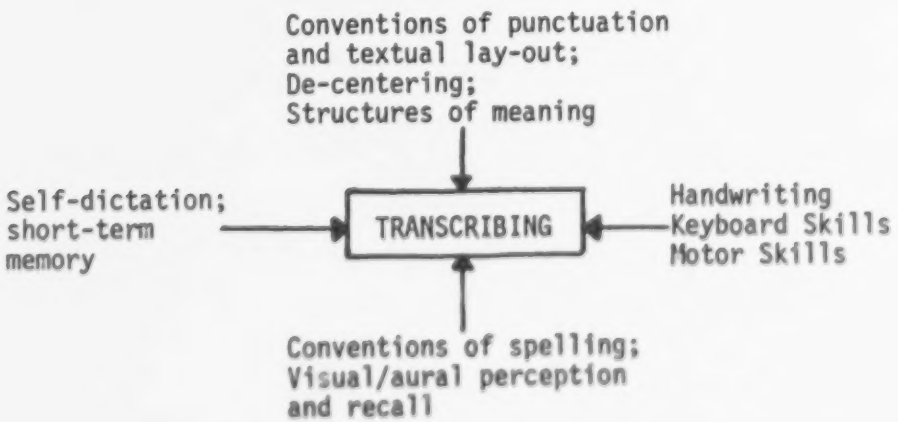
Peters (1967)[24] also argues that it is only when the ter has achieved "machine-like" spelling that he/she is free write with confidence, to explore new ways of expression; h automated responses will come only if pupils are encoged to pay attention to the structures of words, to retain t perception of them, to overlearn, self-test and prese work with pride.

The textual signals involved in punctuation are not ted to pauses in the text; comparisons are often made betwe pauses within utterances in a spoken context and comparable ses if a written text were to be read aloud. As Doughty et. (1972)[25] made clear, a written text does not strictl peaking have pauses at all, unless it is written specifically r recitation or performance. And the analysis of exam s of spoken language taken from everyday speech contexts als that speakers are likely to pause at a variety of differe oints in any given utterance, and are unlikely in fact to pau t the point where punctuation would occur if the same text e to be written down. The purpose of punctuation is not so h to indicate pauses for "breathing space" as to help to as a form of mediation between the written text and the reader It can help to a certain extent to indicate some of the ele s of emphasis and intonation which a speaker can communic by means of paralinguistic features like volume, pitch and fa expression, but most importantly (as Frank Smith (19[26] indicates) punctuation in a written text relates to structure of meaning, "providing a visible spatial f work for the sense of what is being said". It helps the rea to grasp the logic of our message, see how our meanings are ized and developed.

Punctuation is to some extent a matter of convention and personal preference, and to some extent a matter of employing consistent rules, but in either case in order to punctuate effectively the writer must be able to shift his/her perspective or "decenter" and view the text he/she is creating from the viewpoint of the reader; he/she must be sensitive to providing the kinds of signals that will help the reader to "reconstruct" the meanings of the written text. Again, ideally, the grasp of these conventions has to be unreflecting and over-learned so that they are employed intuitively in the act of transcribing or later during the phases of reviewing or editing the text.

Finally, in transcribing the writer must possess skills in handwriting (or keyboard skills) so that the essential symbols can be actually made on the page. In order to do this pupils must obviously understand the separate nature of letters, as well as possess skills in forming patterns of letters; they must develop a fluent, legible, personal style of handwriting; and they must develop effective hand-eye co-ordination in the movement of the pen across the page from left to right, with appropriate movements and pressure of hand, fingers and wrist. (Jarman 1979 and Howell 1980).[27]

Again, the total demands placed on the young or unsuccessful writer in the act of transcribing are considerable. The demands that have to be met which have been discussed can be represented in the following diagram:



(g) Reviewing, Revising and Editing

We have already indicated that revising is not merely the final stage in the writing process; it is an integral and continuing part of the total process. A writer rarely simply drafts a piece, checks it, then re-drafts it. In fact, it is helpful to distinguish three customary but different kinds of revision made by a writer to a written text - reviewing, revising, and editing (Nold in Frederiksen and Dominic 1981).[28]

The term "reviewing" can be applied to the constant process of reflecting, checking and improving while the writer actually makes the marks on the page, or at least, in the short pauses between bursts of writing. Gatherer (1980)[29] draws attention to the importance of the gaps between writing down a "spurt" of language when the writer reads what he/she has written. The mental activity which should be created in these pauses can be used not to "get rid of" what has been written, but to "transform" it and "keep control" of it.

"Revising", on the other hand, suggests a period of reflection when the written text is checked through by the writer, usually after a draft has been produced, and he/she makes corrections to errors of spelling and punctuation, seeks to improve the clarity of the message that is being conveyed, and to remove features that are perceived as being clumsy or redundant in the way of style.

"Redrafting" would normally be applied to the process of re-writing a piece, after critical revision has taken place, to produce an improved version, not merely a "fair copy". "Editing" is the final stage where the writer (or a third person with fresh perception) checks for errors and perhaps reshapes content prior to publication (whatever its form) or submission.

Shaughnessy (1977)[30] observes that the unsuccessful writer is not normally eager to review and edit his script:

> *His movement is headlong, like someone making his way through a lush forest that closes behind him as he moves ahead. Any pattern that counters this pitch forward..... is likely to be avoided or mismanaged, and any behaviour that turns him back, as re-scanning, rewording, and proof-reading do, is against the grain and must be practised.*

Disappointingly, therefore, Applebee (1981)[31] in his North American research reports that only 23% of students interviewed in two schools claimed that when writing for English they made major changes to drafts which went beyond spelling, mechanics, usage or choice of vocabulary. And less than 30% of teachers surveyed (though 59% of English teachers) required more than one draft for written assignments. Spencer (1983)[32] reports from his work in a Scottish context that his team found little evidence of pupils making advanced notes for or tentative drafts of writing, and none at all for any major redrafting of an extended piece of writing.

Since the publication of the *Guidelines for Foundation Courses in English* (SED 1981) and the development of pilot courses at that level, the recommended procedures for the drafting and redrafting of written work will certainly be more widespread in Scotland than was the case five years ago. None the less it is worth noting Frank Smith's (1982)[33] comments on the apparent rarity of the teaching of revision and editing skills in schools:

> *One of the best kept secrets in schools, to which many teachers even seem not to be privy, is that most professional writers produce draft, after draft; that they attack what they write, erasing, adding, altering, and moving words around; that they rarely write on just one piece of paper at a time; and that they do more planning as they write than before they write.....*

(h) Summary

In this chapter, then, we have sought to present the reasons for our decision to adopt an Information Processing model of writing to underpin our developmental work in schools and have presented an analysis and discussion of the constituent elements of such a

model. It is hoped that the insights of the research team which we seek to communicate here will be shared by the reader and that they will enrich teachers' perceptions of their pupils' achievements and difficulties in writing.

In the next chapter we offer a similar analysis and discussion of the theoretical rationale which came to underpin our work as regards classroom methodology.

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V SUCCESS IN WRITING : CLASSROOM METHODOLOGY

Initially, when our research proposal was first made to the Scottish Education Department (September 1980), it was intended that one outcome of our work would be a limited range of materials for classroom use with accompanying advice on teaching and assessment strategies. These materials would be organized to form short intensive units of classroom work, with each unit intended to act as a remedial "blitz" on writing problems identified in the course of a pupil's completion of a Foundation scheme of work (i.e. perhaps once a term). Each of these short remedial units would be arranged so that a variety of materials and strategies would be available to the class teacher, and pupils would work as individuals or in small groups on common language skills problems.

This initial approach to remediation was rejected in the first exploratory phase of the project's work. Although there is a certain attraction in the proposal to develop a battery of intensive classroom strategies designed to overcome an individual's writing difficulties and to apply this battery at regular intervals throughout a course, we were persuaded at an early stage in our discussions that such an approach was unlikely to succeed. The reasons for this early decision were as follows:

- the wide range of reading and writing tasks likely to be set in the context of a Foundation English course and the impossibility of devising generalised strategies that would be relevant to such diversity

- the unknown complexity of actual writing problems likely to be encountered in any classroom, unless they were to be defined in very general terms (e.g. problems with spelling or handwriting)

- the dangers of isolating "surface features" in writing, such as spelling, punctuation and handwriting, and of giving attention to these at the expense of (and possibility without regard to) the more covert aspects of the writing process

- the case argued in the *Syllabus and Assessment Guidelines in English* (S.E.D. February 1981) and supported by our collaborating teachers that although there is a place for the teaching of techniques in language skills and regular provision should be made for their purposeful use, the need for these skills should arise *out of the contexts of the course*

Instead, exemplar materials and strategies for developing skills in writing, which were collected in our review of relevant recent publications, were organized in a resource folder and a selection was used or adapted in the course of our classroom work. A copy of this resource folder was held in each of the participating English departments.

It was decided, then, that our three main collaborating teachers should proceed with their normal classroom planning in consultation with the research fellow and that they should provide activities for pupils which involved all four language modes: some of this classroom work has already been described in Chapter Three. Initially the main thrust of our proposals for change and development was directed towards the diagnosis of difficulties experienced by pupils in completing extended writing tasks and in devising remedial help as individual pupils sought to develop and improve their first written drafts.

(a) Strategies for developing skills in writing

Our initial interviews with teachers and periods of classroom observation indicated that pupils following Foundation courses in English would be experiencing diverse problems as regards writing skills. Because of this (and because their attitudes to school and classroom work could be equally diverse) it was agreed that it would be fruitless to rely on teacher-directed whole-class teaching, except in certain contexts (e.g. the introduction of a task to be attempted by all pupils or a teaching point important for all that had emerged from a particular problem). Consequently we decided that as far as

possible we should adopt an individualised approach in the classroom, or work oriented towards pairs or small groups of pupils.

An essential topic for investigation, therefore, in the first phase of classroom observation was how collaborating teachers managed their classrooms in the context of a pilot Foundation course, to what extent they were already using flexible classroom strategies involving individual and group work, and to what extent changes would have to be achieved in order to bring about individualised attention and work in pairs or groups. The degree of success in achieving this has been described and discussed in Chapter Three.

It was also proposed that traditional didactic or "demonstration"[1] approaches to pupils' difficulties, even if oriented towards individuals or small groups, should not constitute the sole strategy for teaching and learning. In its most familiar form such an approach would require the teacher simply to tell or show a pupil (or indicate in the form of a written comment) that an error (or errors) had been made in a written draft and to indicate the nature of the required correction(s). At a more sophisticated level this strategy can be found in English course books, work-sheets and other programmes of work familiar to both teachers and pupils. Success achieved by a pupil in completing a series of such exercises from a textbook or work-sheet does not necessarily bring success on subsequent writing tasks when similar problems are encountered. As the teachers who were interviewed and who worked closely on the project testified, past experience suggested that this didactic or demonstration strategy appears to make little lasting impact on the understanding of a large proportion of pupils or in their willingness to implement the rules and examples encountered in such exercises in their own writing.

The two alternative broad strategies we wished to explore in the first phase of classroom observation and experiment and which became a major source of material for the resource folder

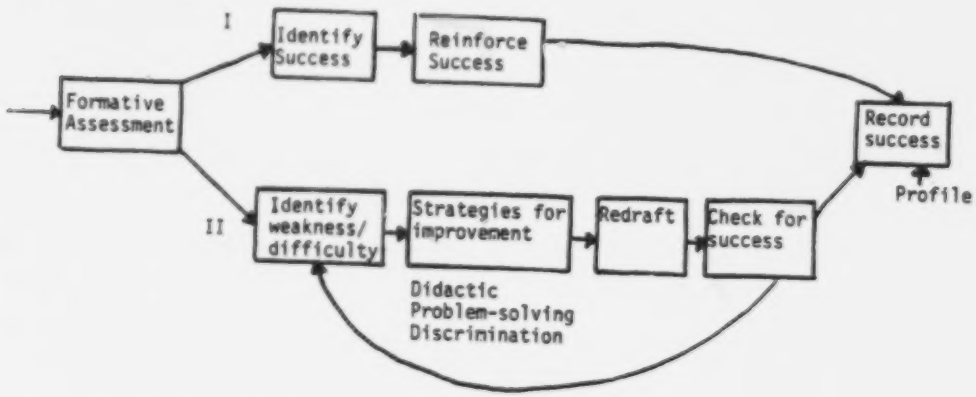
were inductive or problem-centred approaches and strategies which involved some element of discrimination training. The former (problem-solving) approaches involved a greater degree of responsibility being devolved to the pupil for finding solutions to a diagnosed problem (with support from the teacher and appropriate resources), while the latter (discrimination training) encouraged pupils to become more aware of the differences between a "target model" of writing presented at the outset of a task and some kind of "foil" or less successful version, usually an aspect of their own written drafts.[2]

An obvious example of a problem-solving approach to spelling difficulties is for the teacher to indicate that a word (or selection of words) has been mis-spelled in a pupil's script and to direct the pupil to a dictionary to check the spelling for himself/herself; the draft is then corrected by the pupil. Additional support can be given by the teacher as appropriate (e.g. "Go and look it up; it begins wh.... not h..."). A discrimination approach to the same spelling error, on the other hand (and one that could be used in conjunction with the dictionary search), seeks to ensure that the pupil distinguishes between the correct visual representation of the word (in the dictionary, for example) and the incorrect form he/she has used and to fix this correct representation in the pupil's visual memory.[3]

A demonstration approach to spelling errors is probably still the most common remedial strategy or correction technique adopted by teachers. Errors are corrected by the teacher writing the accurate spelling of a word on to the pupil's script (often in the absence of the pupil); the pupil copies this correction (often at a later date and without reflection) as part of a reinforcement exercise and/or includes it in the body of the next written draft.

Although it is tempting, especially with low-achieving pupils likely to be following Foundation courses, to concentrate

attention on difficulties and failure when responding to an individual's first written draft, our collaborating teachers in our earliest discussions rightly insisted upon the importance of the teacher identifying, rewarding and reinforcing success as an essential starting point in his/her diagnosis and to think of formative assessment in terms of the identification of both successes and weaknesses as a starting point for development, not of weaknesses alone. This we accepted. Hence in presenting our recommendations for classroom methodology the approach we advocated for formative assessment can be represented as follows:



(b) Success in Writing

Our rationale for classroom practice, then, required teachers to identify and reward the successes achieved by a pupil with little or no aid in the writing of a draft and to be able to offer different kinds of support and help so that identified difficulties and shortcomings could be overcome as the pupil worked on a second or subsequent draft until eventual total (or an acceptable measure of) success could be demonstrated and recorded in a summative profile. However, the concept of *success* (or *mastery*) as applied to language skills presented considerable difficulties and an extensive agenda for discussion.

It was readily accepted that it is inappropriate to apply the term "mastery" to the reading and writing processes themselves; the mastery of each process represents a life-long task which can never be fully achieved. We are all of us learning to read

(and write) all of our lives; it is not appropriate to inform a pupil at the end of a Foundation course that he has satisfactorily mastered even "basic" skills in writing because "basic" to writing is the effective communication of meaning. Mastery or success in reading and writing cannot be satisfactorily conceptualised as an all-embracing generic term to be applied to a whole domain (like writing).

It is possible, however, as we indicated in the previous chapter at sections (b) and (c), to break down a language domain into its constituent parts and to use the analytic framework thus created as a basis for charting progress and evidence of success. This can be done in at least two ways; the first approach is to "map" the domain of writing in terms of different purposes, contexts and audiences (a holistic approach) and the second in terms of the skills and accepted conventions that have to be mastered in order to communicate the writer's meaning to his/her audience (a sub-skills approach). As in the case of our discussion of the writing process, neither approach, however, proved completely acceptable in the context of the present project.

The first approach, analysing writing in terms of context, purpose and audience (using, for example, the checklist of writing activities in the Foundation English guidelines) helps to sensitize the teacher to the complex nature of possible writing purposes and outcomes, but is open to the same criticism as the initial generic approach discussed above; it is no more appropriate to think of an individual "mastering" different kinds of writing for different purposes and audiences by the end of a school course than it is in the case of the writing process itself; pupils should be encouraged to think of the problems of communicating in writing as presenting continuing problems after they have left school. Similarly, although it is possible to conceptualise writing in terms of a set of skills to be mastered[4] and to give attention to certain aspects of the total process (like handwriting, spelling or punctuation), it did not

appear feasible to attempt to do this in the context of national developments in English at Foundation level. The guidelines for such courses present an "organic view of language" and emphasised, as we have already indicated, the importance of teaching language skills as they arise out of the contexts of a course.

Again a more successful third approach was eventually proposed for our own purposes; this involved mastery not in terms of either total language process or discrete language skills, although both remained essential constituent elements, but in terms of visible success on a particular language task.[5] In adopting this approach we believe we have avoided the difficulties outlined above. In the context of a Foundation course in English a teacher plans a unit of work which will involve a series of required or "core" language tasks to be completed by pupils. Over a period of two years such tasks will cover a variety of communicative purposes for different contexts and audiences in all four language modes. If "mastery" or "success in writing" is to prove a helpful concept in the teaching of language skills in a Scottish context, it is, we believe, best thought of in terms of a pupil's ability to demonstrate that a task has been successfully completed (with appropriate help and support); "successful completion" needs, however, to be defined clearly and explicitly by the teacher who sets the task. Tasks can be set within the context of a unit or scheme of classroom work, they can be supported by a variety of language activities and materials, and their successful completion will involve varied criteria.

A core writing task could, for example, be one central objective for formal assessment in a unit of work (at any level of difficulty - Credit, General or Foundation) lasting for several weeks - it is unrealistic to believe that *all* activities in the unit can be formally assessed. In preparing for this main task and in completing it a pupil would be involved in a variety of other language activities - reading a story or newspaper

article, for example, watching and discussing a videotape, discussing progress on a first written draft with teacher or peer etc. - and would be exposed to varied supportive resource materials. Although informal assessment would be integral to all these activities as the teacher sought to monitor pupils' progress, the principal objective for formal assessment would be a limited range of core language assignments of which the writing task used as an example would be one. The criteria adopted to define success on these core tasks would necessarily depend on the nature of the tasks themselves and the teacher's purposes in setting them. Almost certainly, though, the criteria adopted and made explicit to the pupils would take account of both the context, purpose and audience for the task and the "skills" necessary for completing it. Clearly, a task involving imaginative, narrative writing for publication in a school magazine will not be assessed by the same criteria as a letter of complaint to a local authority.

At the conclusion of a Foundation course, it would not be possible under these circumstances to claim that pupils had mastered writing, or "basic skills" in writing, or that they can now spell or punctuate accurately; but it would be possible to present a *summative profile of achievement* to indicate that specified tasks covering a wide communicative field had been successfully completed, and that these tasks involved in the main accurate spelling and appropriate punctuation. How such a profile could be constructed is clearly open to debate. Our own experience, however, indicates that the organizing principles of a profile should lie in *communicative purposes* rather than in language skills; and evidence for the completion of the profile should come from "core" classroom tasks successfully completed in the context of a Foundation (or other) course.

The implications for classroom methodology of accepting an approach, which defines mastery as success in completing a specific language task is discussed at a theoretical level in the rest of this chapter and at a more concrete level with exemplification from classroom work in Chapters Six and Seven.

(c) Classroom Methodology

In the initial phase of the project it was accepted that an essential source of pupils' motivation in the classroom should be the identification and reinforcement of success. This, it was proposed, should be achieved at two levels: first, by ensuring that pupils experienced some measure of success in completing a writing task, and, second, by demonstrating that they had made visible progress in overcoming difficulties which had been identified in the first or subsequent written draft. As the work of the project developed, as indicated in the previous section, the further importance of teachers' clearly defining the nature of classroom writing tasks and explicitly specifying their criteria for success at the pre-writing stage also became apparent.

The Foundation English Guidelines also emphasise the importance of reinforcing the success achieved by pupils and of formative and diagnostic assessment procedures to promote a sense of achievement:

> *Many pupils taking a Foundation Course are likely to have had experience of learning difficulties in English and a sense of failure in part related to assessment which concentrated on weaknesses rather than strengths. Assessment in a Foundation Course should promote confidence, identify needs, measure progress and assist the planning of learning. It has four interrelated purposes. The most important of these is to help the teacher and the pupil find ways of improving the pupil's learning.....*[6]

The sequence of classroom events leading to a writing task and its outcomes which is recommended in these Guidelines is as follows:

- Stimulus by means of talk, text, outside visit (etc.)
- Discussion preparatory to writing
- Model of the type of writing proposed (optional)

- First draft of writing undertaken by each pupil
- Detailed attention to the first draft before a redraft is undertaken.

Initially, it was accepted that the final stage alone in the above sequence would be crucial as far as the work of the project was concerned; later it again became clear that the pre-writing stage was of equal importance. At first, though, the nature and management of formative assessment procedures were two of the project's centres of interest. Existing classroom practice (borne out by interviews with teachers and classroom observation of our collaborating teachers) indicated that diagnosis and remedial help could be conveyed by means of an informal "interview" or "consultation" between teacher and pupil(s), or in the form of written comments, or both; the nature of the diagnosis and help offered, however, and the effective use of a teacher's limited resources of time remained unresolved problems for further investigation.

In the first phase of the project it was agreed that an important initial task was to provide a framework for the formative assessment of writing which could be readily accepted and understood by both teachers and pupils. This framework or "map" would help them (both) to identify quickly an area of difficulty or weakness in a written draft so that the teacher could immediately help resolve the problem or direct the pupil to remedial activities which aimed to clarify the problem; a renewed attempt could then be made by the pupil to improve the draft. Within the area of formative assessment, therefore, the following sequence of events was proposed:

(i) Production by each pupil of an individual first written draft (extended "own words" writing)

(ii) Formative assessment by the teacher with a pupil in an informal interview, using the diagnostic framework to identify and reinforce successes achieved

(iii) Further identification of a limited number of areas for further development and improvement by the pupil

(iv) Either discussion between teacher and pupil or the direction of the pupil to individual (or small group) activities designed to improve understanding or develop skills and self-confidence in the diagnosed area(s)

(v) Pupil returns to original draft to develop and improve it.

The nature of the supportive diagnostic framework to assist in this sequence of events was clearly of considerable importance and the first attempt to formulate one in the project's initial phase again proved unsuccessful. At first, before interviews with teachers and classroom observation, it was proposed to use a *graphic* framework of writing outcomes (derived from Donald E. P. Smith and others[7]) for the purposes of diagnosis - a framework which is related to the writing system and uses terminology in the main familiar to both pupils and teachers. This was:

Written Discourse (i.e. forms of writing appropriate to different subjects, audiences and purposes)
Paragraphs
Sentences
Words
Letters
Contours (i.e. lines and shapes)

And it was intended that these headings should be interpreted by teachers to include semantic, grammatical and psycho-motor levels. However, it became quickly evident as a result of interviews with teachers in the three participating schools, discussion with the six collaborating teachers and advisory committee, and observation of the three main collaborating teachers at work in their own classrooms that this proposed graphic framework was unsatisfactory for two important reasons:

- It did not match the terminology actually used by teachers when they discussed written drafts with pupils

- It appeared that teachers were interpreting its use as an encouragement to concentrate on the surface features of writing products and not on the cognitive processes that underpinned those products.

Consequently in the final phase of classroom work an alternative framework for formative assessment was designed and developed; this framework was adapted from Carnicelli[8] in the light of our own discussions and classroom observation and proved to be significantly more successful in use. This second framework (or checklist) was more appropriate to the model of writing we had adopted and comprised the following general categories:

Subject (or Content)
Point of View
Register/Style
Organisation
Mechanics (or "graphological conventions")

The categories included appear to cover at a very general level important aspects of successful writing which would be relevant to most classroom extended writing tasks; they also include (with the exception of *point of view*) those areas mentioned by teachers in our preliminary interviews - the communication of meaning, coherent structure and organization, register appropriate to context and audience, varied vocabulary and sentence forms, conventions of spelling and punctuation, and legible presentation (Chapter Two). The framework was intended to be flexible and adaptable to different teaching styles and writing tasks, *not* as a sequential hierarchy to be worked through systematically. The classroom use of this checklist for the purpose of formative assessment is described and discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

In the course of the project's development, as a result of classroom observation and discussions with collaborating teachers, it became apparent (as indicated earlier) that concentration on formative assessment in isolation was proving to be of limited value; it seemed necessary to link formative assessment more explicitly to the phase in the classroom which

involved pre-writing activities. If the concept of "success on the task" was to be an important feature of classroom methodology, it proved to be important to seek to define the nature of that task to the pupils as clearly as possible before they began to write and to make known to them what would count as success in completing the task. In other words, it seemed important for teachers to make explicit both to themselves and to pupils their criteria for success in the completion of a task *before* formative assessment occurred. In practice this clarity and explicitness proved to be very difficult to achieve initially and it seems likely that difficulties will persist and omissions will occur when first attempts are made by teachers until the procedures become part of their habitual professional practice.

In more concrete terms, then, the questions teachers must answer on their pupils' behalf when they set a writing task are:

- *In completing this task what will I (the pupil) have to do in order to succeed?*
- *How will I (the pupil) know that I have achieved success?*

It is arguable that this strategy encourages a much more convergent approach to writing tasks than is at present the case in English classrooms (although assignments which explicitly encourage divergent thinking can clearly be accommodated in the strategy). However, the converse can also be argued. At present writing tasks set by teachers of English can be very vague and open-ended; from our experience teachers seem eager to adopt "the flotation principle"[9] in assessing the outcomes of writing tasks. That is, they allow pupils to interpret a writing task in any way they (the pupils) believe is appropriate; when teachers respond to the first draft, they allow certain salient features of the script to "float" to the surface for encouragement, praise or censure, relying on implicit meanings and assumed shared understanding derived from past classroom experiences.

In encouraging our collaborating teachers to be more explicit about both the nature of a task and their criteria for success when they set writing assignments within the context of a scheme of work, we found it helpful to adopt the following broad approaches:

- *Use the headings of the checklist designed for the purposes of formative assessment at this pre-writing stage also in order to derive explicit detailed criteria for success*
- *Analyse the task set and consider what pupils will have to do in order to achieve visible success*
- *Use a written model of success (preferably by a pupil or non-professional writer) to exemplify success and derive if necessary further criteria from this model. These can be communicated to pupils both orally and in writing.*

It is important to emphasise a number of points at this stage in the exposition of the project's rationale to prevent misunderstandings. First the use of a written model at the pre-writing stage does *not* imply that pupils are required to imitate or copy it; *the model simply exemplifies success* and can be used by both teacher and pupils throughout the processes of drafting, formative assessment and redrafting as a source of comparison with pupils' own work and as a source of discussion. Second, *there is no single, correct way of deriving appropriate criteria for success*; this process is the responsibility of each individual teacher (although there is nothing to prevent groups of teachers planning together and sharing this responsibility). It is likely that different teachers will articulate different goals in setting apparently similar assignments and that the balance of features that each teacher requires in the completion of a task will vary; what is salient in one teacher's requirements will not necessarily be replicated by other teachers. Equally, of course, *different criteria for success will be derived from different kinds of writing tasks* (a diary entry, for example, as opposed to a letter of application). And third, *success should be defined as far as possible in terms of a pupil's actual written performance.* If "appropriate register"

is to be a criterion of success, it is incumbent on the teacher to demonstrate to pupils (perhaps by reference to a written model) what is meant by the term "register" when it is applied to writing, and to make it clear to individual pupils how a particular use of language is inappropriate so that changes can be made.

(d) Criterion-Referenced Assessment

From the preceding discussion it will be clear that the approach to assessment that the project has adopted is criterion-referenced, not norm-referenced. For the purposes of summative assessment, pupils are judged by reference to their degree of success on a specified task and criteria for this success are made explicit by the teacher before the pupil begins to write his/her first draft. Pupils are given opportunities to improve and develop their drafts, in consultation with the teacher and their peers, in order to meet these criteria, but the only elements of comparison and competition that exist are between the pupil and his/her own performance in meeting the requirements of the task. Clearly, though, tasks do not need to be standardized in their demands; they can be presented to pupils at different levels of difficulty. Pupils are not compared with each other; terms like "excellent" or "poor" are not used in describing or categorising scripts, nor are marks or grades. Criterion referenced assessment is an "all or nothing" concept - either the pupil has achieved success on the task at the appropriate level of difficulty as defined by the teacher, or further work is required in order to meet these demands.

It is *not* necessary for success to be defined by the teacher as total success; that is, the writer does not necessarily have to achieve, for example, 100% correctness in spelling, or to use in detail all the expected conventions of punctuation. The teacher must make clear what is *acceptable* to achieve success at the outset of the task. When the teacher's performance criteria are met, all that is required of the teacher as regards procedures for summative assessment is a tick in each pupil's

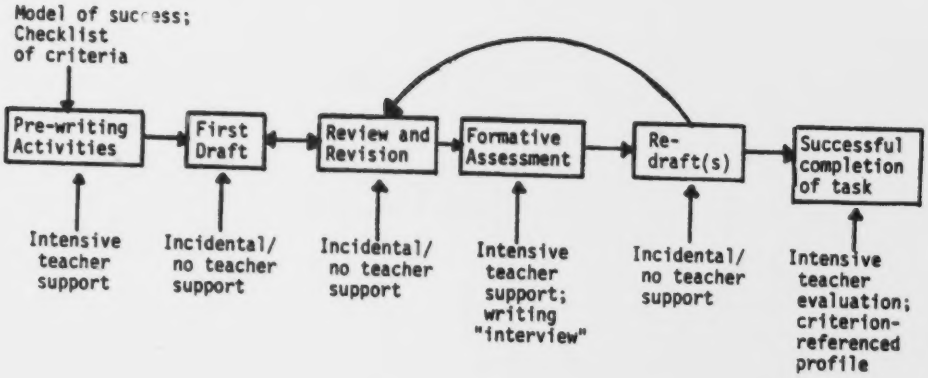
profile to indicate that success has been achieved on the specified task. Detailed criteria for success are available from the classroom teacher on demand to meet the needs of other school staff, parents and employers.

Because of lack of time, no systematic work has been attempted in the course of this project on designing and testing different possible kinds of summative profile to record pupils' success on writing tasks. However, an example of one such profile to record success on an individual writing task is described and discussed in Chapter Seven.

(e) Summary

It has been proposed that a mastery approach to the teaching of language skills in the context of a Foundation (or any other) course in English is best conceptualised as taking the form of a series of supported attempts by pupils to achieve success on a language task set by the teacher at an appropriate level of difficulty; motivation in the classroom should come principally (although not solely) both from pupils' experience of success and their awareness of visible progress towards successfully completing a task; this awareness of success and progress depends for a pupil to a large extent on the teacher's ability to recognize and encourage different kinds of success in the pupil's first attempts and to recognize and help overcome difficulties so that the pupil can improve his/her work; the process of encouragement and development, as a pupil works towards a successful conclusion of a task, is assisted greatly by the teacher's willingness and ability to present to pupils an initial model or exemplar of success before work on the task begins and to make explicit his/her criteria for its successful completion.

Thus the sequence of classroom activities outlined above can be represented diagrammatically as follows:



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2. See Smith, Judith M. *A technology of reading and writing: Volume 4 designing instructional tasks* New York: Academic Press 1978 pp.137-139

3. The most systematic example of this technique we found in Smith, Judith M. et al. *Programmed spelling* Ulrich 1978 (Michigan Learning Modules No. 4). A very helpful and more accessible book, however, is Moorhouse, Catherine *Helping adults to spell* Adult Literacy Resource Agency 1977

4. See, for example, Smith, Judith M. *Skill domains* Ulrich 1978 (Michigan Learning Modules No. 12)

5. Smith, Judith M. *A technology of reading and writing: Volume 4* p.18

6. *Guidelines for English at Foundation Level* Scottish Education Department 1981 p.9

7. *A technology of reading and writing Volumes 1 and 2* 1976/1977

8. Carnicelli, Thomas A. in Donovan, T.R. and McClelland, B.W. (eds). *Eight approaches to teaching composition* Urbana: N.C.T.E. 1980 (p. 101f.)

9. Rowntree, Derek *Assessing students: how shall we know them?* Harper and Row 1977 p.82

VI THEORY INTO PRACTICE : FIRST ATTEMPTS

The pictures which had emerged from the initial period of classroom observation of our three main collaborating teachers at work (summarised at the end of Chapter Three) indicated that it was going to be necessary to ask the teachers to develop some of the strategies which they were already employing and in some cases to encourage changes in their practices in order to implement in full the project's theoretical rationale. But it did not appear that their current practice presented fundamental obstacles to these changes. In many instances there was evidence that the teachers were already moving towards accepting some of the implications of the rationale (which had been discussed with them and modified in the light of their comments from its earliest stages) for their classroom work.

The answers to the research questions provided by this period of observation and summarised in more detail at the end of Chapter Three show us that:

- considerable help and support were already being provided by the teachers at the pre-writing stage
- pupils' difficulties in writing were being informally categorised by the teachers under headings similar to those in our own checklist
- considerable help and support were being offered to pupils as they wrote their first and subsequent drafts, including the use of individual "interviews" between teacher and pupil to identify success and suggest improvements
- all three teachers showed flexibility in their organization of work and management of the classroom, although there were clear differences in teaching style in these respects

However, several questions remained to be examined in the subsequent development work in the classrooms. All three teachers, for instance, presented a piece of writing to the pupils which could have been used as a model for the pupils to refer to, but

they did not all exploit this technique to the full. *To what extent could teachers incorporate such models usefully into their pre-writing activities?* Similarly, all three teachers expressed *criteria for success* on a task for their pupils, but to varying extents and at various stages in the process. The project's rationale proposed that the specification of criteria for success should be explicit and presented to pupils before they began the main task of writing so that they could have a clear understanding of what was expected of them and could work more independently. *How best could our teachers achieve this?* The teachers undertook *formative assessment* in individual consultation with pupils, often spontaneously, which was a demanding and time-consuming activity. *How could this individual contact between pupil and teacher best be used?* Could teachers approach formative assessment more systematically and in what ways could this be more effective? On some occasions a teacher would encourage pupils to monitor their own and each other's work. Could the pupils' independence be supported through a wider range of tasks than those currently being undertaken, and could the collaboration between pupils be cultivated profitably?

A first stage for this area of development was of course to make the requirements of the task and the criteria for success more explicit, but a second would involve providing pupils with an outline or check-list for the task to which they could refer and against which they could judge their performance. In the next phase of the project's work then, discussed in this chapter, the teachers were asked to attempt to incorporate these elements into their teaching programme. It is important to remember, however, in reading the accounts that follow that the theoretical rationale described and discussed in the previous two chapters are final statements written with the benefit of hindsight; the rationale was not presented to our collaborating teachers in exactly this form. The classroom activities described in this and the following chapter, the difficulties we encountered and the discussion that evolved, all helped to clarify and finalize our theoretical position.

Our intention, then, in this final phase of the project's development work in the classroom was to continue to work closely with the collaborating teachers, but it also seemed desirable to introduce a further element of intervention in order to study the implementation of the project's theoretical rationale. By this time, after several periods where the research fellow and the teachers worked together, the relationship between them seemed to allow for this more interventionist approach. In addition the teachers were teaching the same classes as in the previous phase (as S4 now) with the exception of teacher B who had only retained half of his S3 class in the transition. However, the research fellow did not work in his class until the second half of the winter term, which allowed some time for familiarisation between the teacher and the pupils. Likewise this continuity of classes between phases meant that the pupils were accustomed to having the research fellow present in their classes, so the disruption was kept to a minimum.

The first part of the following report is concerned with the work in only two of the participating teachers' classes. We originally intended to repeat the observation/intervention phase in the classroom of the third teacher, but in the event adopted another strategy whereby in the third school, the research fellow planned and implemented a unit of work herself in the S4 class of the collaborating teacher and then in the S3 class of the deputy collaborating teacher, with the class teacher in the collaborative, supportive role of observer. This phase will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 7.

The teachers were asked to interpret and implement the theoretical rationale that has been presented in the preceding chapters in the context of a unit which would have as its main focus a piece of extended, continuous writing. The teachers were also encouraged to use the research fellow as a resource in planning and implementing the unit. They were also invited to employ a variety of strategies (perhaps from the collection of strategies compiled in the resources folder) to overcome

diagnosed weaknesses in their pupils' writing. As in the previous classroom development work the research fellow's role was one of participant-observer.

In order to monitor the teaching and writing processes in depth it was decided to select several pupils out of each class for close observation. Limiting the number of pupils in this way was intended to make the collection of data on the pupils' progress a more realistic proposition than gathering data on a whole class. For example, the limited time which the class teacher would have to discuss an individual pupil's performance could be focussed and the collection of the pupils' writing would be simplified and the sheer amount of writing to be analysed would be kept to a manageable quantity.

Furthermore this strategy of choosing a few pupils for the researcher to monitor was also offered as a strategy for the teachers themselves to adopt as a way of making effective use of their consultation time in the classroom, i.e. they were asked to give as much attention, if not more, to the selected pupils in each writing lesson; that discussion with the researcher about pupils' progress should be limited to these pupils; and any recordings of teacher-pupil talk should be confined to these pupils. The two criteria by which we asked teachers to choose pupils for the purposes of gathering research data during these particular units were that reasonable attendance was expected from them and that on the evidence of their past performance the teacher expected to find a range of strengths and weaknesses amongst these pupils' writing. However, the criterion for selecting pupils in such a strategy within the context of routine lessons by the normal classroom teacher might be a systematic one, to ensure that all the members of the class received an equal amount of attention over a term or session. Indeed the period for focussing on any group might vary, certainly it would not be essential (nor feasible nor desirable) to concentrate on a few pupils for an entire unit. In some cases for example a week spent on each group in depth might be more appropriate.

To increase our understanding in this phase of classroom practice a further set of interviews was planned with the participating teachers. They were interviewed prior to the period of observation to ascertain their plans for the unit to be taught including the writing activities they were going to include; how they would support and assess their pupils' work; and to establish the teachers' perceptions and expectations of the pupils whom they had selected for close observation. The teachers were interviewed again after the period of observation in their classrooms had been completed to elicit their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme of work which had been implemented and to identify any areas in which they had changed their usual practice and in which they were likely to adopt the strategies recommended through the project into their subsequent practice. The form of the interviews was semi-structured (the schedule appears as Appendix 6 at the end of this chapter)* and they were video-recorded.

The two teachers whose work we will describe are teachers A and B who were introduced in Chapter 3. As in that chapter, we will examine the data thematically rather than sequentially, that is, rather than describe what teacher A did throughout the teaching of the unit followed by what teacher B did, we will present teacher A's activities in relation to pre-writing, writing and post-writing, drawing comparisons between them and between their practice and the theoretical rationale.

(a) Planning and Pre-Writing Activities

In both cases, teachers discussed their plans with the research fellow at an early stage. Teacher A was intending to teach a unit which she had used successfully before, using material which she had adapted from various sources. Teacher B, on the other hand, intended to use a unit which had been devised (and successfully implemented) by another teacher, along with a third colleague (the deputy collaborating teacher) with a parallel class. Both teachers responded to our request to make a piece of writing a central outcome of the unit: teacher A worked

towards producing a simulated newspaper report, teacher B a short story.

Teacher A's unit was planned for September-October 1982 and was implemented over a period of some fifteen lessons. The context of the work was a study of newspapers through which the teacher intended:

- *to enhance/encourage practice in the skills of written English*
- *to encourage awareness of the role and function of the media, especially newspapers*

The unit was presented to the class in typewritten booklet form. The teacher intended the pupils all to tackle the first part of the unit, but then expected that only some pupils would proceed beyond the main writing task. This task was to be a piece of continuous writing and was set out in the booklet as follows:

- *What, in your opinion was the most interesting EVENT that took place recently in Britain? Examples might be a sports event, or even an accident.*
- *Pretend that you are an 'on-the-spot' reporter and write the news story that you would have sent back to your newspaper.*
- *REMEMBER TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS WHAT, WHO, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, HOW.*

The teacher also issued the pupils with copies of a newspaper (*The Glasgow Herald*) to use as a model for their report-writing. The entire unit of work was seen by the teacher as a fairly flexible programme through which pupils could work at their own speed on tasks which the teacher chose to suit their individual capabilities. The criteria for success on the main writing task were articulated at the planning stage by the teacher as follows:

- *the six key factors set out in the written specification should be included*

- *the piece of writing should be satisfactorily structured particularly as regards paragraphing, but also as regards the sequencing of sentences*

- *spelling, punctuation and neatness should be appropriate*

During the work on this unit the pupils in the classroom were usually seated in groups of four and for the purposes of this period of observation the teacher had asked the four pupils whom she had selected for special observation to sit together in a group. Therefore the research fellow was able to position herself close to this group for observation and recording purposes. This also had the effect that the target pupils frequently referred to her for support when the class teacher was occupied elsewhere.

In order to present the main writing task to the pupils, teacher A organised the class in such a way as to ensure that the written outline of the task which appeared in the pupils' work-book was supplemented by oral support from her on an individual or group basis. In the case of the target pupils she talked to the entire group of four pupils as soon as one of them had reached the main task in his progress through the workbook. Firstly she read over the task outline which was written down, which contained criteria for success on the task in terms of content: "What was the most interesting EVENT that took place recently in Britain?...write the news story...". The content was further reinforced by reference to the preceding section which dealt with the six essential features of news reporting, the six key questions "What? Who? Where? When? Why? How?" The register for and purpose of the writing task were also specified: "Pretend that you are an 'on-the-spot' reporter and write the news story that you would have sent back to your newspaper." The teacher also reiterated the criteria for content in setting up the task:

Teacher: (to 4 pupils) *What d'you think we're going to have to do in this story?*

Pupils (S.G.) *Put, well, what's happening.*
(M.) *Why.*

Teacher: *Why it happened, if possible, why it happened.*

Pupil: (B.) *How did it happen?*

Teacher: *Right...so when you write it you simply check off where it is. In other words that becomes your checklist for the story. Remember we used a checklist before? Have I done this? Have I done that?*

In addition she had shown them through this a strategy for planning their content (the checklist) and went on to suggest the alternative strategy of a "cognitive map"[1] or visual representation of the plan:

Teacher: *...or you could build up your story by saying,* (and she illustrated the following with her cognitive map) *"Right I'm going to write a story about...the strike.* ("The strike" was written in the middle page and the following elements arranged around it) *Why didn't the teachers join in the strike? And then you'd get your 'where?'...etc."*

The cognitive mapping was also presented to the pupils as a useful pre-writing activity in that it broke down the writing task into manageable elements, i.e. the facts could be committed to paper first and an order imposed on them at a later stage:

Teacher: *If you do it that way sometimes you don't get bogged down... In other words you put it down and then you would put it all together in the proper...order.*

She also referred to the copies of *The Glasgow Herald* which pupils had as a model in terms of organisation for their own writing:

Teacher: *...if you remember from the one you were looking at, the "who" and the "where" come very quickly at the beginning. The "why" and the "how" come in the middle.*

and likewise:

> Teacher: *...if you're stuck look at the one we were looking at, that gives you the standard layout for a story.*

In this pre-writing discussion then, the teacher had sought to present explicit criteria for success in the areas of content and organisation which supplemented the explicit criteria of content, audience and purpose presented in written form. The teacher referred to the model in terms of content and organisation only but she did not make other explicit use of it. The pupils could of course have inferred other criteria for successful newspaper reporting, such as the appropriate register or style, or conventional spelling and punctuation as indeed they could from their own familiarity with newspapers.

The elements of this pre-writing phase which are most interesting are the expression of her criteria for success, the strategy of drawing up a checklist and the use of a model for the pupils' writing. In comparing teacher A's practice in this unit to her previous unit which was observed we see some further move towards the project's theoretical rationale. The task was outlined both orally and in written form at the outset; this introduction contained expression of some criteria for success on the task, but the teacher did not express all of the criteria which she did in fact use in making judgements on the pupils' work as will be illustrated below; she used a model in the form of a newspaper and drew pupils' attention to particular aspects which she wished them to imitate. The strategies which the teacher invited the pupils to use were to draw up a checklist from the original outline and to use the written model to support them in their writing. However, there was still room for development in these pre-writing activities and our attempts to develop some of these strategies in the last phase of the classroom work will be considered in greater detail in due course.

The unit which teacher B intended to use was planned for November-December 1982. However, the unit as originally conceived (by a colleague) was considerably pruned by the class teacher who concentrated on the one main writing task of composing a short story. In discussing his plans for teaching this class the teacher had expressed a desire to focus on aspects of pupils' writing which he saw as "remediable" and to record these in a profile together with positive aspects of their writing (such as "good use of vocabulary"). He also selected four pupils for close observation (although in the event one of these four proved to be a very poor attender and was replaced in the group by another). The selected pupils were spread throughout the class in their normal seating positions, unlike the arrangement adopted in class A. The result of this was that a great deal of the responsibility for recording the interaction with his pupils remained with the class teacher himself, supplemented by obse. ıtion made by the research fellow.

The main writing task in the unit, which was called *Boy Meets Girl*, was presented after some introductory discussion and reading on the subject of dating. The teacher then played a videotape of a schools' television play, (called *Ties* from *Scene*, BBC TV). The teacher planned to use this as a stimulus "text" for the pupils' writing assignment. In order to make the task of making explicit the criteria for success simpler, the teacher was encouraged to set the same task for all the pupils. For teacher B this was contrary to his usual practice, where he would normally offer a choice of subjects for pupils to write about, which also effectively meant a choice of tasks. However, since the teacher's task of specifying the criteria for success on one task was proving demanding enough, limiting the scope to the one writing task seemed a feasible strategy, if only for the purposes of this observation period. With hindsight however, and anticipating a discussion of what the pupils produced in these two and the following two units, this narrowing of choice did not limit the individuality of the pupils' expression. On the contrary, one could argue that the support afforded by the

proposed programme helped to release the pupils from the usual constraints of their writing and that they were given a clearer objective to work towards.

The writing task was outlined for pupils in this way: having shown the videotape once and talked over elements of the plot and characterisation with the class the teacher replayed it explaining that he intended some writing to emerge from this stimulus material. The task was to "write the story of an outing" (which, he explained, was a deliberately vague term to cover all kinds of outings)..."where a girl or a boy meets a boy or a girl whom at first they dislike but then change their attitude about." (Again, it was explained that the "change of attitude" could be interpreted in any number of ways). This outline followed one part of the plot of *Ties* closely but allowed more flexibility in setting and characterisation. The teacher also offered the pupils the option of "retelling the plot of *Ties* as their own story." A further specification was that the number of characters should not be too many and that the change in the attitudes of the main characters should be gradual.

Several pupils required clarification of the task and the teacher dictated a structure to the whole class:

The outing: What (is it)? When? Where? Why?
The boy: Who? What like?
The girl: Who? What like?

This structure was intended to help the pupils to get started on their plans and together with the previous directions establish some criteria for success in the area of content. In the discussion with the class teacher following the observed lesson, the research fellow explored the issue of how the task had been made explicit to the pupils. It was suggested to the teacher that the directions could usefully be translated into written form to provide a permanent reference for the pupils as they wrote. The research fellow undertook to produce this checklist for the following lesson. This could be seen as a development

of the checklist which teacher A encouraged her pupils to extract from their task outline and this kind of checklist was eventually one of the main features of the final units implemented by the researcher. The checklist for teacher B's class reiterated the outline, listing the essential features of the plot, included a reference to appropriate length and presented a slightly expanded version of the framework which the teacher had dictated. (The Checklist is reproduced as Appendix 7 at the end of this chapter.)*

In addition, the stimulus material even though it was presented on videotape could be seen as a model for the pupils' composition: although the only explicit references were in terms of plot and character the whole "text" could be regarded as an implicit model for other areas of the task such as register and purpose.

(b) Activities during writing

The salient difference between the practice of teachers A and B during this unit of work was the amount of time devoted to the main writing task and the activities associated with it. Although both the tasks were conceived as a part of a larger unit, teacher B devoted proportionately longer time with his pupils on the task (eleven lessons) compared with teacher A (three lessons). The nature of the task is important of course in this respect, in that one teacher was concerned with the composition of a newspaper report and the other with a short story. The time spent on the single writing task was the subject of some concern to teacher B and he surmised that perhaps the genre had not been entirely appropriate in the context of his Foundation course.

In encouraging their pupils to move towards an acceptable and successful piece of composition through redrafting both the teachers followed sequences of individual consultation with pupils in which they discussed strengths and weaknesses and directed the pupils to further work. However in teacher A's class almost as many consultations were initiated by the pupil - for example, "Miss, that's it finished on scrap paper if you want

* see page 147

to check it" - as were initiated by the teacher e.g. "Right, B----, let's see what you're doing" (teacher A) or "D----, bring me your work please" (teacher B). This was indicative of teacher A's more spontaneous approach to formative assessment and the more systematic approach which teacher B used. In addition pupils in both classes were encouraged to collaborate in their work either in pairs or in groups of three or four.

There were several issues of the management of formative assessment here which were of particular interest and were relevant to the project's development. Although teacher A's consultations were less systematic than teacher B's, she seemed to cater adequately to the writing needs of each pupil in her class and the pupil initiation of many of these consultations helped to ensure this. Therefore, although the project's rationale would favour a systematic approach rather than a spontaneous one the pupil-initiation element in this model of formative assessment was worth developing further. This was achieved in some measure through enabling the pupils to monitor their progress through the task by providing them with a checklist against which they could compare their efforts. Some systematization was imposed through the checklist, while giving more responsibility and independence to the pupils for their own progress through the task.

A further major difference between the two teachers' classroom activities was in the nature of the teacher talk directed to the whole class (rather than to individuals or small groups). Both teachers would normally use the beginnings and the ends of periods for whole-class administrative- or management-based talk such as checking the register of attendance or settling down the class as they came into the room, but teacher B also often used this talk for teaching purposes. For example, he might find a weakness in the work of one or several pupils, recognise it as being an important teaching point for others in the class and therefore draw the whole class together to talk about it, e.g. "...one thing I'm coming up against again and again...what I

spent a long time with G---- on (was that) I want you to have some idea of who's going to read this...." (Teacher B to whole class). This seemed to be a matter of individual style but it would seem to be necessary for the whole class to be working on the same task at the same time which might not always be the case in a class's progress through a unit. It could be argued of course, that some teaching points such as awareness of the concept of audience were universally applicable and could be usefully discussed in a class at almost any time.

Other activities which pupils and teachers were involved in during the writing period were particularly relevant to the concerns of the project, such as the use of alternative models in formative assessment, the way in which the teachers managed to deal with pupils who had been absent at a crucial stage in setting up the writing task and collaboration between pupils. Both teachers had occasion to direct pupils to models for their writing (other than the original model text) during formative assessment. Teacher A used one pupil's writing to illustrate a point of layout to another and teacher B encouraged one of his pupils to refer to a collection of short stories to help him to organise his opening sequence. The pupils themselves were left to compare their versions with the model, note the discrepancies and make any appropriate changes. This was a useful technique which gave responsibility to the pupil for discriminating between his work and an exemplar which was to be used at a later stage in our classroom development work. This strategy might also be implemented with a group of pupils and indeed the teachers both used group collaboration in the initial stages of writing and for remedial work. The pupils responded to this readily and often referred to each other for help instead of or before consulting the teacher.

The teachers themselves, however, dealt with pupils who had been absent on their return, if they had missed some important preliminary lesson. Although one of these teachers had organised peer-tuition in a previous instance, it seemed a worthwhile

exercise to devise some way of compensating for the lessons missed by a pupil, without expecting the teacher to repeat his/her directions, perhaps a number of times, for returning absentees. This problem was addressed in the final stages of the project's classroom work in relation to the devising of models and checklists for pupils to use.

The catalogue of activities which has been outlined above will now be expanded and illustrated in a more detailed consideration of the work and progress of one pupil in the class of teacher A together with an account of the support and intervention provided by the teacher while he wrote. A selection of work finally produced by pupils in the second class is appended at the end of this chapter (Appendix 8).*

(c) Case Study: Brian's Progress

(i) Teacher's perceptions of pupil

Class teacher A was interviewed prior to the period of observation to learn what her perceptions of Brian and his previous work were and also to discover how she intended to teach him during the unit. The information gained was also to be used, together with a follow-up interview after the observation period, to compare and contrast his work during the unit and to provide evidence of what progress or lack of progress had been achieved during the unit.

The teacher selected Brian for close observation because she recognised him as being typical of the kind of pupil who would appear in Foundation classes: he had had remedial attention during the first two years of his secondary schooling and she described his reading and writing as being at a "very basic level". However, she recognised that he was able to understand and follow instructions and was good at organising himself to work. She had taught Brian throughout his Third Year and had recognised an improvement in his confidence in writing. In general, Brian was a keen worker who was willing to help other pupils with their difficulties.

* see page 149

Brian had a number of weaknesses in his writing, both in copying and own-words writing assignments. In copying, for example, if he were having to concentrate on selecting appropriate information to copy out, he would write in block capitals in his own script. The extent to which this is purely a transcription problem is not clear. He did however show evidence of confusion between upper and lower case characters in much of his writing. For instance he would omit capital letters at the beginnings of proper nouns and would insert capitals (especially a capital B) in the middle of a word.

He seemed to be self-conscious about his handwriting and had been working on developing it, sometimes experimenting with different styles of *y* for example. The teacher also recognised that he did not mark paragraph boundaries because, she suggested, "he did not really understand paragraphs". Nevertheless, the teacher was pleased with Brian's writing; certainly the quantity had improved during the last year.

Her plans for Brian were to continue to encourage quantity of reading and writing at the same time helping him to improve the quality of his work. She would help him to put order in his writing but would not spend too much time on paragraphing, although she saw an inroad into this through his apparent command of sequence.

The teacher intended to continue to encourage his work on his handwriting. As far as the capital letters were concerned, sometimes she thought it best not to insist on the insertion of capitals at proper nouns when Brian was already grappling with other problems, as for example, how to structure a play script, but would tackle it in prose writing. She would, however, try to get him to avoid using capital letters randomly. She intended to continue to do this through exercises designed to make him aware of the incidence of, for example, capital B as it appears in his own name and then as it occurs in other words in small case.

Brian's teacher clearly had diagnosed a number of strengths and weaknesses in his writing and was intending to develop those strengths and try to make some improvement in his areas of weakness.

(ii) Brian's progress on the task

Having set up the writing task for the group of pupils which included Brian, the teacher encouraged them to collaborate in their work. She suggested that they could work in pairs, and that perhaps they could work on the same newspaper story (although none of them did so). At first Brian had difficulty in applying himself to his work, complaining of feeling unwell, but eventually made a start on planning a report of the fighting which had taken place recently in Lebanon. However, having referred to his group for help with relevant facts he changed his topic:

Brian: *What else was there on the news last night that happened?...Bad news, good news... I'll write about Prince William. It'll be better.*

W.(pupil) *Just do that then.*

Brian proceeded to construct a cognitive map (the final version of which appears as Fig. 1) but immediately encountered spelling problems:

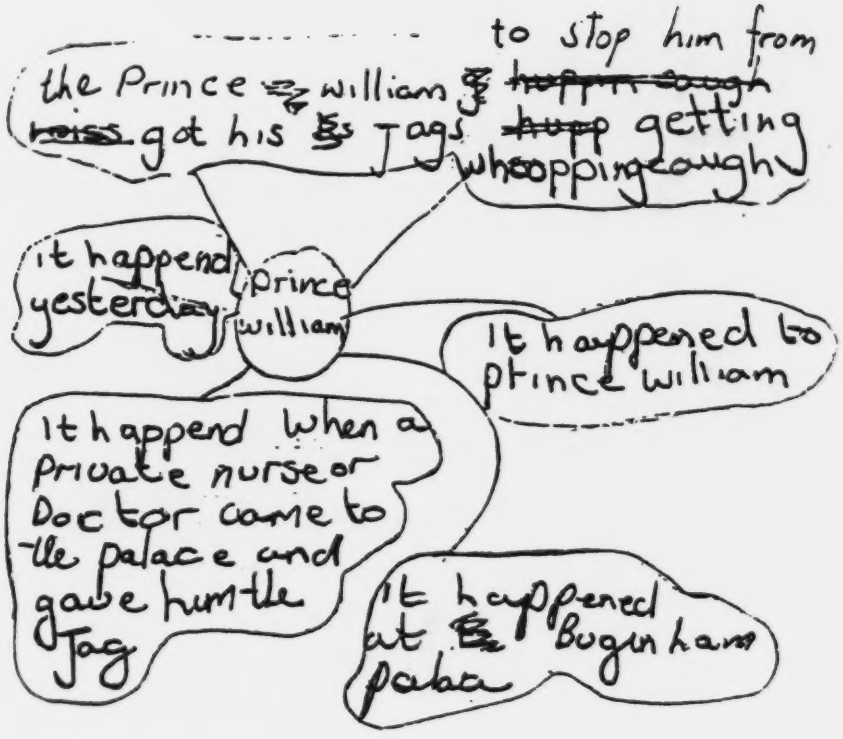
Brian (to the group) *How do you spell William?*
S.G. (pupil) *W, I, double, double...*
W. *W, I double L...*
S.G. *LL...*
W. *IAM*
Brian *I....is it that?*

And again:

Brian *How do you spell "whooping cough"?*
W. *H U double P, ING. That's 'cough', C O U G H. Has Prince William got whooping cough?*
Brian: *To stop him from getting it.*

Fig. 1

Cognitive Map


to stop him from
the Prince willian got his Jags getting whoopingcaugh
it happend yesterday
prince william
It happened to prince william
It happend when a private nurse or Doctor came to the palace and gave him the Jag
It happened at Bugin hams palace

Brian recognised that he had some difficulties in spelling and had asked for help before attempting the difficult words himself. However, his peers were not infallible and on the second occasion he copied down an unorthodox spelling. The teacher, however, picked it up as soon as she looked at his work.

Teacher A:	*"Whooping cough..." is that not in the dictionary?*
W.	*Have I spelt it wrong?*
Brian:	*I couldnae tell you how to spell it.*
Teacher A:	*It's actually 'whoop' as in 'whoop up and have a party'.*
W.	*Is it double O?*
Teacher A:	*Yes but it's WH. There it's there (in the dictionary). That's because when you cough you do a 'whoop'.*
(Teacher left the group)	
Brian:	*Is it WH...? OO Whooping? Is that it?*
W.	*W H ...*
Brian:	*Oh aye, O P... I've got it.*

The teacher then spent time with other members of the class ensuring that everyone could proceed with their work and indeed the whole class was working well.

Following the structure provided in his workbook Brian completed his plan and proceeded to produce a first draft of his report (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2

First draft

At Buckingham palace yesterday ~~when~~ ~~when~~ prince william got his whoopping cough Jags when a private doctor or nurse ~~gave him the jags~~ came to the palace in the morning

It is interesting to note that of the two words for which Brian asked for help in the spelling, "William" is spelt correctly, while "whooping" is rendered "whoopping", yet "Buckingham", which appears as "Buginham" in his plan is correctly spelt in his first draft, without any reference to others. (There are of course many features of interest in this piece of writing such as that it appears as one complex sentence, and that Brian has made corrections in punctuation syntax and style, but let us consider what features the writer and his teacher were concerned with explicitly.)

Having produced his first draft Brian wanted some feedback on his effort and since the class teacher was otherwise occupied, asked the research fellow to read it. She pointed out that all the information which had appeared in the map ("How it happened") had not been included in his first draft and encouraged him to keep the plan to hand for reference. Brian reread his work checking off what he had done:

Brian: *Where it happened. How it happened. How it happened? There it's there (pointing to "to stop him from getting whooping cough") it says how it happened.*

I dinnae ken whit to write for that. "What happened", and "Why" it happened, "When it happened", but I dinnae ken what to say for "how" it happened.

This problem had already arisen with two other pupils in the group. (In Scots dialect 'how' can mean 'for what reason'). The research fellow therefore asked these pupils with whom she had discussed the problem, to try to explain to Brian what was required, but the how/why confusion continued to plague the communication:

R.F. (to pupils) *Tell him what's meant by "how".*
S.G. *Whit's happening in the place.*
R.F. to Brian: *Tell them what you were talking about*
Brian *Prince William getting his whooping cough jag.*

W. *How was he on the news?*

S.G. *Because whooping cough damages your brain, and he's part of the royal family.*

.....

R.F. (to S.G.) (trying a different approach) *How did you get your whooping cough vaccination?*

S.G. *Because your mum and dad says you've got to get it.*

R.F. *How did it happen?*

Brian: *Oh Aye, it happened an' you had to go to hospital and get it.*

R.F. *How did Prince William get it done?*

Brian: *In his arm.*

R.F.. *Did he go to the hospital?*

Brian: *No, it came to...*

S.G. *No, a private nurse came...*

Brian: *...to the Palace.*

(Brian then read his work aloud to himself)

"At Buckingham Palace Prince William got his whooping-cough jag... a private doctor or nurse came to the Palace". Oh, see how I spelt Buckingham. I didna spell it right. That's no right... Or is it?

R.F. *That's the way I'd spell it.*

Brian: *Aye, that's right. I thought I'd missed out the 'ham'.*

R.F. *...because that's a big space there (see Fig. 2).*

Brian: *It was that I thought I hadn't..... missed.*

....

Is the story alright?

R.F. *Is it finished?*

Brian: *It's all I could think of.*

R.F. *Have you checked your (plan)?*

Brian: *Aye, I had a look.*

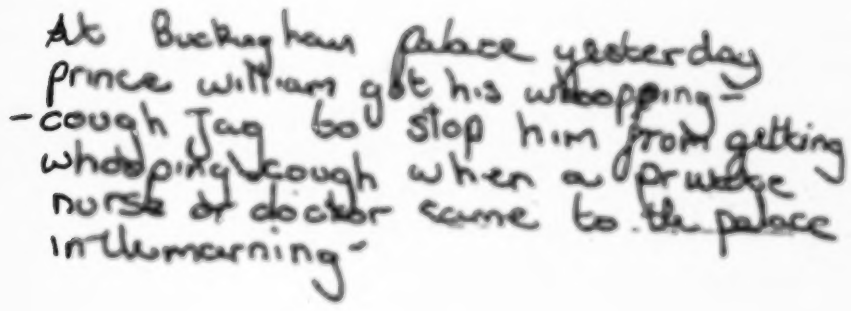
R.F. *You've got everything in have you? Let's see. (Reads aloud) "Prince William got his jags", right... You haven't got that bit in (referring to entry in the plan), you've got the name of the jag but you haven't got "to stop the disease".*

Brian accepted this and began to redraft (Fig. 3 draft 2a) reading aloud to himself as he wrote.

Fig. 3

Second Draft

2a


At Buckingham palace yesterday
prince william got his whooping-
-cough Jag to stop him from getting
whooping cough when a prudge
nurse or doctor came to the palace
in the morning-

Brian had not assumed complete responsibility for his own work, perhaps through a lack of confidence as evidenced by his several requests for help with spelling before he made an attempt himself and his unfounded self-criticism over the spelling of "Buckingham", which he had already corrected between his mapping and the first draft. Furthermore he had not made fully effective use of his cognitive map.. "I had a look" he said, but he had not included all the relevant points from the map in his first draft. However Brian and the other pupils in his group were aware that they should check over their writing once they had finished a draft. When asked by the researcher what they usually did on finishing a draft, two of them volunteered that it should be checked for spelling mistakes and commas, and Brian added that the writing should be checked for capital letters "At the start ahd at the...important bits". If the pupils could be encouraged to routinise the checking of their content too, through the cognitive map or a checklist, this would, we proposed, give them more responsibility for their own work.

Having completed a second draft Brian asked the research fellow to read it over again "Is that alright now?" The researcher praised his effort so far and pointed out that he had written two

different spellings of "whooping". Brian chose one as correct but decided to check it in a dictionary and duly crossed out the double 'p' which was in error.

Thus we see that by the strategy of pointing out an inconsistency but not making the correction explicit, Brian did research and correct his work independently.

At the beginning of the following lesson Brian applied himself to reviewing and making improvements to his second draft (the amended draft appears as Fig. 4).

Second Draft (revised) Fig. 4

2b

At Buckingham Palace yesterday Prince William got his whooping-cough Jag to stop him from getting whooping cough when a private nurse or doctor came to the palace in the morning.

We have some insight into what Brian understood he was doing since he explained to a pupil who had arrived late what was to be done:

Brian: *See that bit there (the other pupil's plan), ken how you've done all that and then you write down your story, you've to put in capital letters and all that and full stops and then when you've done that you've to ask the teacher what to do... You're to do it till you're finished all the capital letters.*

However, what Brian was attempting to do with his current draft was more complex and sophisticated than his directions to his peer suggested. He talked about his task in terms of surface features of capital letters and full stops, but underlying this was an awareness of syntax as evidenced by his own attempts at improving his second draft. A comparison between draft 2a and 2b (Figs. 3 & 4) show the changes that Brian subsequently made to his script. Certainly he has corrected, or made less ambiguous, the capital letters at "Buckingham Palace" and "Prince William", but he also

wrestled with a different problem, the sequencing of his story by sentence divisions. He realised some difficulty with this and referred to the research fellow for assistance.

Brian: *Miss, see this bit here? Where it says, "At Buckingham Palace yesterday, Prince William got his whooping cough jag..." can you write...? No, you cannae really put a full stop there because it's... "when a private nurse or doctor came to the Palace in the morning." So I was thinking, I was kind of reversing it all round about so I could put in a full stop.*

The researcher tried to find out why Brian wanted to do this:

> *...you wanted to make that all one sentence but are you deciding now that you shouldn't make it one sentence?*

but probably failed to find out the real reason for Brian's dissatisfaction with the structure by then asking a leading question: "Is it a bit long?" to which Brian responded in the affirmative. Certainly he is right that he could not simply insert a full stop after "jag" without making subsequent amendments. But what does he mean by "I was reversing it round so I could put in a full stop"? He has already reversed his subject and predicate from the normal order. Was it perhaps a vestige of familiar sentence-combining exercises where two simple sentences are combined to form one complex sentence?

The researcher continued to work with Brian to try to resolve the problem:

R.F. *So what are you going to have to do?*

Brian: *Eh, reverse? "Then a private nurse or doctor came in."*

R.F. *Change the "when" to "then"? So then you'd have: "At Buckingham Palace yesterday, Prince William got his whooping cough jag. Then a nurse came to do it."*

Brian: *Or you could say, "In the morning a nurse or doctor came, came in... a private nurse or doctor came in to the Palace."*

R.F. *How would that read: "At Buckingham Palace yesterday, Prince William got his whooping cough jag to stop him from getting whooping cough. In the morning a private nurse or doctor came to the Palace." So you'd put "In the morning" up there? Does that sound right now?*

Brian: *It's a wee bit better.*

Brian was not however convinced that this was the best order and never committed this version to paper. He wanted his story to be longer and tried again on his own and then asked the researcher for help:

Brian: *Ken that bit there (draft 2b), d'you write, can you just put a "when" in there? "In Buckingham Palace yesterday..." It doesnae make sense. No you cannae really dae that, eh no? I was going to say, "At Buckingham Palace yesterday, when Prince William got his whooping cough jag..." I dinnae ken. I'm no really sure. It doesnae really make sense.*

R.F. *No, the "when" doesn't make sense does it? I don't think you need the "when" at all.*

(Brian crossed out his "when").

He then took a fresh sheet of paper to begin draft 3 but the research fellow intervened so that Brian would not simply copy out his second draft again. She tried to introduce another strategy for making a piece of writing longer:

R.F. *If you want to make it longer, rather than just putting in one word, what else could people be interested in?*

Brian: *I'm no really sure. I think it's all there.*

The researcher then asked a series of questions intended to help Brian to provide supplementary information; for example:

R.F. *Who's Prince William?*

Brian: *Prince Charles' son.*

R.F. *Why did they announce that he got his whooping-cough vaccination?*

Brian: *To make other people get their children vaccinated as well.*

Brian began to write out his third draft, but stopped after the first two lines. The researcher interrupted him:

R.F. *How are you getting on with that Brian?*

Brian: *Do I have to write that twice? See like whooping-cough, it says, "...got his whooping-cough jag...to stop him from getting whooping-cough."*

He was aware of the importance of varying his vocabulary and not repeating whooping-cough twice in the same sentence. However, his attempts to find a synonym for whooping cough were fruitless so the researcher suggested another strategy:

R.F. *...the idea of the jag. D'you know any other words for a jag?*

Brian: *Jag... Vaccination?*

R.F. *So you could say that Prince William got a vaccination and in the next bit you could say what kind of vaccination it was couldn't you?*

Brian seemed to accept this and went to consult a dictionary for the spelling of vaccination. In the event, however, an alternative version did not appear since Brian seemed to forget the format:

Brian (to himself) *I forgot what to write after that, after I've wrote "vaccination". "Yesterday...Buckingham Palace... vaccination".*

A few minutes later, he asked for help again,

Brian: *Miss... I've got all that "vaccination when a private nurse or doctor came to the Palace in the morning..." I can't think what else I can write... I'm trying to think of other...*

R.F. *You're trying to think of something else to put in?*

Brian: *I dinnae think it's long enough.*

This was a reiteration of a previous obstacle, which had been tackled by the researcher prompting Brian for more information through questions. The strategy had only had transient success. If the information was to be incorporated into Brian's writing the information would have to be more permanently available, so while rehearsing the questions and answers, Brian was encouraged to note down what he intended to include in his third draft. (The notes appear at the foot of draft 3 Fig. 5). This technique was further developed to provide a format for such jottings by the pupil or teacher at a later stage in the project. Before he made any further progress with draft 3, however, Brian made a second attempt at finding an alternative to "whooping-cough". One of his peers rather ingeniously suggested that he should go to ask the school nurse, but Brian decided that he would retain "just vaccination".

To review Brian's progress between drafts 2 & 3 then, he has moved to part-way through his third draft (to "...Whooping cough is useual..."). He has correctly overcome his previous errors (the spelling of "whooping" and the capitals at proper nouns); he has substituted "vaccination" for "jag"; but otherwise the text had retained its original shape since Brian had given up his attempts to "reverse" or insert a "when". The research fellow had tried to help Brian (a) to think his way through his problem with the structure by illustrating (orally) the implications of his proposed changes and (b) to find an alternative method of increasing the length by helping Brian to make further information explicit and then noted for future reference. Therefore, although Brian seemed hesitant and rather unsure of how to progress, the researcher was trying to leave him the

Fig. 5

Third Draft

3b

At Buckingham Palace yesterday Prince William got his whooping cough vaccination when a private nurse and doctor came to the Palace in the morning. Whooping cough is on the increase at the moment, and this is an Royal aproval By the royal family to show other people to get it.

Vaccination and about the whooping cough the prince of Wales son

responsibility for his own text and was trying to show him strategies for improving his drafts which he could retain and exploit in the future.

At this point, the class teacher came to Brian's desk to check his progress. One of the concerns which she had expressed in interview in relation to Brian was his weakness in punctuation, especially in relation to capital letters which would presumably account for her introduction:

Teacher: *Right, Brian, how's the capital letters getting on?*

Brian: *I'm trying to think of...*

Teacher: *Why is that a capital? (She indicated the 'a' of "vaccination" which Brian had written as a capital letter.)*

Brian: *It is just the way I had writ it.*

Teacher: *...It should be a small one shouldn't it? (And she supplied the general rule.) You never get a capital letter in the middle of a word, ever.*

The teacher over-wrote Brian's capital with a lower case "a".

She then went on to make further changes in Brian's script:

Teacher: *"When a private nurse or..." should be "...and doctor came to the Palace." You've already given that ("Palace") a capital.*

The teacher then inserted "yesterday" above "in the morning" before checking herself as she noticed that he had already specified "yesterday" in the first line:

Teacher: *Oh, you've got "Yesterday Prince William got his whooping-cough vaccination..." I see what you mean. It's a long way down isn't it?*

Brian: *I was trying to think, I was trying to reverse...*

The teacher then suggested a substantive change to Brian's text:

Teacher: *Why don't you say, "Prince William got his whooping-cough vaccination yesterday when a private nurse and doctor came to Buckingham Palace... at the request of the royal parents"?*

The teacher thus composed a piece of text herself as a demonstration of effective writing to offer to Brian, who spent some considerable time later trying to recall the teacher's actual words. The teacher then composed another addition for Brian, writing it down on his script as she did so:

Teacher: *You know they make quite a fuss about it they want to encourage other people to warn about the real danger of it.*

"Whooping cough is (the teacher scored out "useual" and wrote) "on the increase and this royal..."

Unfortunately the tape in the recorder which had been monitoring this conversation reached the end of the first side, losing what might have been a crucial part of her directions to Brian. However, we do have the evidence in the teacher's handwriting of what she wrote down for Brian:

...on the increase at the moment and this...

and her parting words to Brian:

...it'll encourage other parents to do it

which Brian subsequently paraphrased as "to show other people to get it."

Brian then tried to reproduce the teacher's words to finish his story but immediately encountered difficulty in recalling "at the request of the royal parents". He knew that he wanted a word which ended in "...quest" but, perhaps because the original phrase had been unfamiliar to him he did not succeed. At first he called on the other members of his group in the hope that they had been

listening to the teacher as she had been speaking to him, and indeed one of the group did eventually find the right word, although Brian did not recognise it:

Brian: *How d'you spell ...quest?*

S.G. *What? Ask... look...*

Brian: *I'm no looking it up. I dinnae ken how to spell it, I dinnae even ken the first letter of it. (He consulted the dictionary). An... in... an... I cannae find it. I forgot what I was looking for again.*

S.G. *Request.*

Brian: *Inquest, aye.*

S.G. *Inquest or request?*

Brian: *Request? What did you say?*

S.G. *The same.*

(Brian consulted dictionary again)

Brian: *In... I forget. I'm look at A, P...*

(He then tried to elicit help from the research fellow, who had not heard the conversation between the teacher and Brian)

Brian: *Miss, see for this bit, can you write "whooping cough is on the increase and at the moment...this is a in..." I'm trying to think, it's no ... "inquest by the royal family", I'm trying to think of the name. I cannae get it right. Inquest doesnae sound right, 'cos it says here (in the dictionary) "legal inquiry into a case of sudden death"...but...it's not that.*

R.F. *It's not that. Did the teacher mention it?*

Brian: *I'm trying to get it out... I cannae really think of the name. (Once again one of the group intervened).*

S.G. *Request.*

Brian: *It's something like what the Royal Family says. It was the name (the teacher) used.*

The researcher suggested alternative courses of action so that Brian would not go on struggling with this problem:

R.F. *You could put it another way, or wait until you can ask the teacher and just go on to the next bit.*

Brian: *I'll just miss it out.*

Brian did go on to finish his story as it appears in Fig. 5:

...this is an royal aproval By the royal Famely to show other people to get it.

and announced, "I've got it right that time".

The next time that the teacher looked at Brian's work, then, he had finished draft three. She noted that he was checking his "spelling and things" and that then he could proceed to producing a fair copy: "You can make your own headline, copy it out taking your time and doing it nice and neatly, watching your spelling." She then went on to review his draft with him so that he would have "all the corrections there (to) make sure (he) followed them":

Teacher: *You've got all the capitals. Correct, right... capital B, capital P, W... That's spelt correctly...(Reads). There was one stage... (indicating last sentence).*

Brian: *Aye we done that.*

Teacher: *(Reads) "Whooping cough is on the increase at the moment and this is a royal approval..." (corrects spelling) "approval". "This royal approval..."*

Brian: *I never spelt family (correctly)...*

Teacher: *"...by the Royal Family...will show other people to get it," or "will show other people," or say, "encourage other people to get it," rather than "show". (Teacher made the change.)*

After fetching some fresh paper for Brian the teacher reviewed the work once again and suggested one further change, to delete "by the Royal Family". She then praised his achievement and encouraged him to proceed with a final version. Brian and the teacher discussed a suitable headline, and others in the group contributed their ideas. The final version was "The Royal Vaccination". Brian carefully began to design this headline using stencils.

To review then what had taken place, since the teacher came to consult with Brian on his work while he was part-way through draft 3: the teacher had commented on and corrected Brian's script, changing an upper case character in an inappropriate place to lower case and reinforced this correction with the appropriate rule; she had praised Brian for correct insertion of capitals subsequently; praised his correct spellings and amended two spelling errors; and made several changes of content in Brian's work. Brian himself had contributed little to the composition independently.

Brian was then absent for two lessons and when he returned he studied his amended version of draft 3 carefully and decided to write out his final version underneath his stencilled headline. The teacher suggested that he might copy it out in the same format as draft 3 or that he could make his script narrower like a newspaper column. She showed him her own typewritten version of his story (Fig. 7), printed in a narrow format, as a model, but did not leave it with him at that point. Brian applied himself to writing out his own final version (draft 4, Fig. 6). This final draft maintained most of the corrections which were made during the drafting process except for the spelling of "approval" and two further incorrect spellings, of "increase" and "encourage", appeared. In addition Brian had written "vaccination" in the second line in block capitals (the subsequent alteration was made using correction fluid) which he had begun to do in draft 3. Indeed Brian pointed it out to the teacher himself, and was prepared to justify it:

Brian: *I put "vaccination" in block...*

Teacher: *Why?*

Brian: *Because it's the usual thing that they do. They usually put...*

Teacher: *Is it?*

Brian: *... the big heading in block. You see it in the Daily...*

Teacher: *In the middle? In the middle of a piece of writing?*

Brian: *Sometimes they do. Maybe no in that paper (The Glasgow Herald which was the original model for this unit) but you see it in the Daily Record.*

Teacher: *I don't believe it.*

Brian: *Aye.*

Teacher: *I don't believe it... it isn't really accurate. Take the liquid paper and put it over...the way it is there, small writing.*

Brian duly made this change, but his defence was justified if his "model" newspaper was the Daily Record. On the front page alone of one issue (20 September 1983) there were four examples of a word or phrase appearing in block capitals within a sentence.

The teacher distributed the typed versions of different newspaper stories amongst the group (Brian's appears as Fig. 7). The pupils seemed pleased to see their work presented like this, but Brian had reservations. The teacher's version was different from his. He read his type-script aloud, then:

Brian: *What did I write? I didn't write that. I didn't write "hoped".*

Another pupil in the group helped him to check this and Brian accepted his help willingly:

W. *Where is yours?*

Fig. 6

Fourth Draft

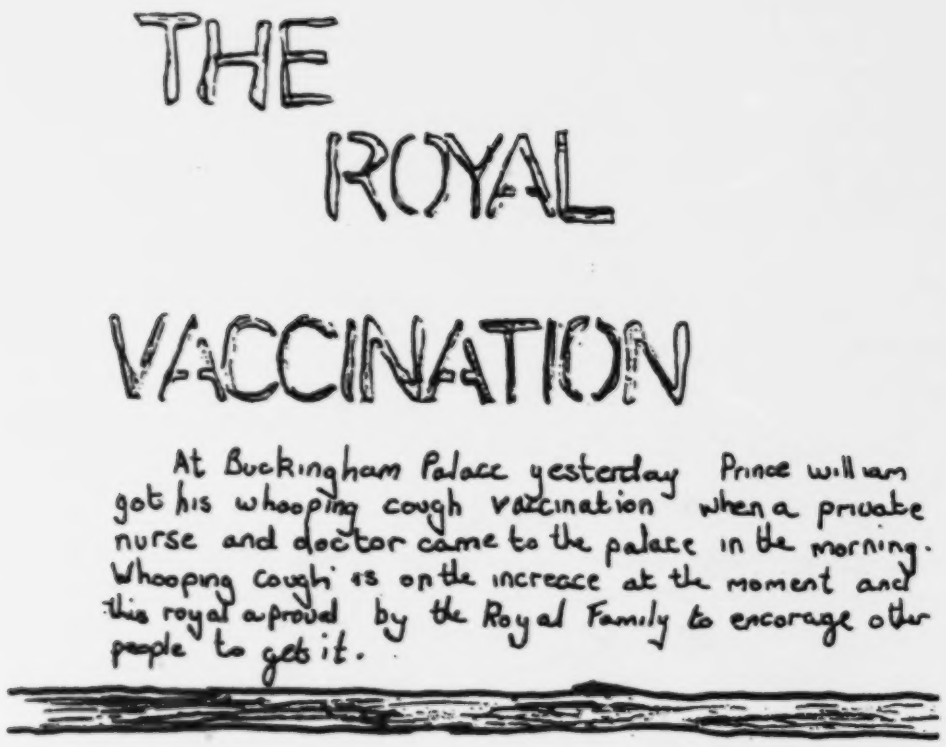

THE
ROYAL
VACCINATION
At Buckingham Palace yesterday Prince william got his whooping cough vaccination when a private nurse and doctor came to the palace in the morning. Whooping cough is on the increase at the moment and this royal aproval by the Royal Family to encorage other people to get it.

Fig. 7

Teacher's typewritten version

At Buckingham Palace yesterday Prince William got his whooping cough vaccination when a private nurse and doctor came to the Palace in the morning.

Whooping cough is on the increase at the moment and it is hoped that this royal approval will encourage other people to get it.

Brian: *We'll read it out and see if it's the same. Right I'll read this one (draft 3, which the teacher had worked from) and you follow it there.*

Between them they established that "and it is hoped" had been inserted.

Brian: *That's different. I kent there was something wrong. Where was the "hoped" about?*

Brian then consulted the teacher, pointing out her addition. The teacher agreed that she had inserted it "automatically" explaining that otherwise the sentence would not have made sense. It is interesting to note that the second paragraph of the teacher's version is almost entirely her composition, produced while they were reviewing Brian's work.

(d) Discussion

It was important for the project team to examine some of the issues raised during this period with the help of the class teacher. Following the unit, having allowed time for analysis of and reflection on the data collected, the teacher was once again interviewed to explore her perception of the implementation of the unit.

The teacher expressed that in general she had learned from the experience of participating in the project in this way, that the "routine" had focussed her mind more closely on the events in the classroom as indeed her involvement in the programme of development in Foundation English had benefited her professional development. However, one negative result for her had been that she felt she had put undue pressure on her pupils to concentrate on the writing assignment, in some cases hastening them towards the main writing task before they were ready, because she perceived that this was a principal concern of the project.

A further reservation that the teacher had about her implementation of the unit was that presenting instructions formally in writing to her pupils had led to frustration for them since for some the reading of instructions was a demanding task in itself. Her normal practice was to introduce tasks orally in small groups. Yet, in setting up this particular task the teacher had used a combination of these two methods, through both oral and written instructions. The result however was, as the teacher perceived it, that the pupils had felt that the teacher had left them written instructions in order to prevent them from referring to her subsequently for help in the clarification of the task.

The use of a newspaper as a model she saw as relatively more successful, but in the more general sense of having broadened their experience of newspaper reading (one of the overall purposes of the unit) rather than in the particular case of using the individual newspaper reports as models for their writing. She preferred that pupils should refer to resources (such as the newspaper in this case) spontaneously, without having the technique imposed on them by her. In exploring the issue of whether the model could have been exploited more effectively, for example through explicit reference to the appropriate length of an item, the teacher, on reflection, accepted that the strategy could have been developed in this way. However, in the particular case of Brian's subject, *The Royal Vaccination*, there was no appropriate model available in the newspaper. Therefore in the final phase of the research, when the project team set out to investigate the possible further development of the model as an aid to writing, we were careful to choose a model as similar to the eventual writing product being demanded as possible.

Another feature of this unit which was encouraged through the project's theoretical rationale, the technique of cognitive mapping, was recognised by the teacher as being valuable. She welcomed the visual reinforcement of the abstract framework which it offered and explained that this was a technique which she used herself in her writing and had encouraged her other, more academic

classes in its use, yet had never before applied it to this kind of class. The teacher also indicated that she was interested in whether her pupils would use the technique of cognitive mapping in subsequent work, but she did not make explicit plans for encouraging them to do so.

At the outset of the unit, the teacher had intended to record formative assessment of her pupils in an anecdotal profile. However, this intention had only been fulfilled through a few entries at the beginning of the unit. The teacher explained that she had found it unproductive to do this, since she found herself merely recording what she knew intuitively herself from past experience of work with these pupils. What was required instead of this kind of personal teacher's record was, she had now decided, a simple checklist of achievement (or lack of achievement) to which the pupils also had access. In the last units of classroom practice, the researcher did explore this issue of record-keeping more fully and developed a profile for formative assessment, in which both teacher and pupil could make entries concerning strengths and weaknesses in their writing.

The work which Brian had produced met with the teacher's approval and indeed she had noticed an improvement from previous writing tasks that he had attempted. His success, she felt, lay in his having included the six key factors of a newspaper report in his story; in organising them in a logical order; the writing made sense (although the final sentence is ambiguous and could be misleading); his punctuation was appropriate and he had concentrated hard on his spelling (the teacher generously attributed Brian's misspelling of "increase" as being her fault in not writing the word carefully enough for him); and that the length of his story was appropriate to the task. She added that Brian's redrafting usually consisted of literally copying out each draft, a difficult enough task for him due to his weak reading and transcription skills, without making substantive changes, as if he felt he were committed to the draft once he had written it down on paper. Clearly Brian had made some

substantive changes during this writing task, in the areas of lexical choice, logical connection and surface features in the first part of his story; the second was largely copied from one version to another. In subsequent work, the researcher was concerned with encouraging effective use of redrafting techniques, where pupils could monitor their progress through their drafts and make informed decisions about the development of their writing.

The nature of the teacher's intervention in Brian's writing was also explored during this interview. The teacher explained that when she approached Brian to consult him on his writing (during draft 3) she had intuited that he wanted his story "rounded off" and that she had proceeded to help him in this. However, she expressed her awareness that additions she had made, or suggested he make, may not have been entirely appropriate. For example, her offer of "at the request of the royal parents" may have been too unfamiliar a structure to Brian for him to be able to incorporate it into his own composition, although she recalled that "approval" was a word which Brian had already noted on his draft in an attempt to include it somewhere in the text. This issue of how the teacher can best intervene with suggestions and amendments to a pupil's text and yet preserve the pupil's authority for the text was one which was subsequently examined. The problem was partly resolved through the medium of a separate form on which such suggestions could be recorded, while retaining the shape of the original text and requiring the pupil to discriminate between one version and another and assume the responsibility for redrafting himself/herself.

Having confronted this issue of the nature of the changes she had made to Brian's work, the teacher and researcher then reflected upon the effect which the changes made in the teacher's typewritten version of his story had had on Brian. The teacher had been pleased that Brian had highlighted her addition and was aware that the changes she had made "automatically" had been counter-productive. Her normal practice in producing such a

typewritten version of a pupil's work was to simply amend the initial capital letters and full stops if necessary but not to make any substantive alterations. In this case, Brian's absence and her urgency in typing the text had contributed to the error.

On reflecting on this period of classroom work, several issues emerged which we intended to pursue in subsequent classroom practice. We were impressed by the teacher's flexible management of the class, enabling individual consultation to take place between pupil and teacher and the willingness with which Brian referred to others in his group for help. Brian also illustrated a measure of independence and awareness of the importance of solving (in the short term at least) some of his own spelling problems through dictionary research.

However, a certain degree of mismatch appeared to exist at present between the teacher's stated criteria for success on the task and Brian's own concerns as he wrote and redrafted his report, on the one hand, and also the teacher's apparent concerns as she commented on his work, helped him to develop his draft and rewarded his success. A closer match obviously existed in the course of the teacher's discussions with the research fellow at the planning and evaluation stages (after the task had been completed), but during the actual process of writing in the classroom, we felt that the match should have been closer.

The use of the newspaper as a model for the pupil's writing had not been fully exploited. It fulfilled an important function in the initial stages as stimulus to the writing task, but little reference was made to it subsequently. Because of the wide choice of possible topics, it had been impossible to provide an actual newspaper report on Brian's subject to help him to understand more clearly how his writing task could be successfully completed.

The strategy of cognitive mapping which the teacher employed was worth pursuing further. For instance, when Brian felt he needed to lengthen his text, he could have been encouraged to return to his map to add further points there, in order to make them explicit and available for reference. On the other hand, during the period of redrafting the teacher's intervention tended to take the traditional form of "demonstrating" solutions to problems rather than helping Brian to understand the nature of those problems and reach his own conclusions. Brian willingly redrafted his work and made some progress through his drafting towards a final version. Although, as was noted above, most of the new material which appeared in the process originated from the teacher herself, changes which Brian (or the teacher) made to spelling, punctuation and structure seemed to be maintained in the last draft. None the less, we were ultimately left with the impression that Brian's final version did not perhaps represent good value for all the time, work and effort that had gone into it.

In subsequent work we attempted to address these issues. Brian's attempts to recall the teacher's directions were due mainly to the transience of the spoken interaction between teacher and pupil (which became all the more obvious when the cassette recording designed to give them permanence failed). Could this interaction be "saved" economically for the pupil to use as he redrafts?

And the issue of the teacher's influence on the final text was also considered. How could suggestions for changes to the pupil's script be made, while allowing the pupil to maintain control over his text and to choose whether to include them or not?

(e) Summary

In this chapter, then, we have presented two general case studies of our collaborating teachers seeking to accept the implications of our theoretical rationale and to integrate it into their own classroom practice as they implemented a unit of work at Foundation level; we have also investigated in depth one pupil's progress as he completed the main writing task in one of these units.

We have also sought to provide answers to the three main research questions we formulated at the beginning of the chapter for this phase of classroom development and observation:

- *Was it possible for our teachers to make explicit their criteria for success for the main writing task at the pre-writing stage? If so, how could these stated criteria be effectively employed in the course of the pupils' classroom work?*

- *How effective in practice was our notion of the use of a model to provide direction and support to pupils as they worked towards the completion of the main writing task?*

- *What appeared to constitute an effective form of interaction between teacher and pupil(s) during the processes of formative assessment and redrafting?*

Clearly our work during this phase of the project provided equivocal answers only to these questions. In the next chapter we describe further attempts made by the research fellow herself in two classrooms in our third collaborating school.

Reference

1. Buckley, M. and Boyle, O. *Mapping the writing journey* University of California, Berkeley, Bay Area Writing Project 1981 (Curriculum Publication No. 15)

APPENDIX SIX

Interview Schedule

Purpose:

a) to explore the teachers' plans for the proposed writing unit

b) to establish the perceptions and expectations of the teachers concerning the four pupils selected for close observation.

This discussion could be illustrated by examples of the pupils' past work chosen by the teacher and previously studied by the researcher.

Interview questions

a) Plans

1. What are your plans for the next unit?
2. What teaching strategies do you intend to use?
3. How will you record your assessments of the pupils?

b) Perceptions of pupils

1. How long have you been teaching this pupil?
2. What strengths and weaknesses have you noticed in his/her reading and writing?
3. How does he/she perform on particular reading/writing tasks?
4. How will you go about teaching the pupil now?

APPENDIX SEVEN

Checklist for main writing task

School B

"Boy Meets Girl"

Writing Assignment 1.

Write the story of an outing where a girl/boy meets a boy/girl. At first she/he doesn't like him/her, but in the course of the story, they gradually change their attitude and come to like each other. (If you like, you could use the characters and the setting of *Ties* for your story.)

It is important that:

1. your story should involve a limited number of characters and that the main characters should be described well;
2. the outing is fully described;

   and
3. the story should be long enough and detailed enough for you to show the gradual changes which take place in the attitudes of the main characters.

Before you start writing the first draft of your story, make notes in answer to the following questions

a) The Outing
   - What kind of outing is it?
   - When does it take place?
   - Where do the characters go?
   - Why do they go on the outing?

b) The boy
   - Who is he?
   - What is his name?
   - How old is he?
   - What is he like? (You may find it helpful to refer to the list of words for describing people which you already have.)

c) The girl
   - Who is she?
   - What is her name?
   - How old is she?
   - What is she like? (Look at the word list for help.)

APPENDIX EIGHT

A selection of the final work produced by pupils in the class of teacher B.

Boy Meets Girl Kites Shirley

"I am bored" said Carol sitting next to Joan in the bus, wet inside and out.

"Im bored and wet" said Joan. "I wish we could go off somewhere exciting."

"Youre always dreaming why can't we just go and not come back we're old enough why don't we?" said Carol.

They never said anything all the way home from work, they just looked out the window at the rain.

The next day it was a Saturday and it had stopped raining. Carol was up very early and phoned up Joan. Joan answered the phone and Carol said "Get a bag packet with your things in it, I want to get away from everything that's in this place."

So Joan thought she was having her on so the packet a bag and waited for Carol. A horn went outside the door, Joan ran up to her sitting in the taxi and said "What's going on?"

As the driver was looking at Carol she said "Jump in."

So Joan got her bags and sat in the taxi. "What's going on Carol?"

"Were going on an outing," as she was pleased with herself. "To Blackpool, Driver", Carol said.

"Who's paying," Joan said with a wondering look on her face.

"I am, don't you worry."

"But you haven't any money" said Joan.

"I got it and that's all that cares". They got there in the end but it had broken down once then we had to get petrol. So Carol gave the money to the Driver and Joan said, Where did you get all that from. Did you rode a bank or something?

Carol standing with a fist-full of twenty pound notes and said, "Shut up!"

They were walking along the beach when they saw two men walking

to-wards them. Joan was waiting for them to speak and when they were on their way back Carol got Joan away from them by saying fancy a shot on the Waltzers.

"Alright!" said Joan. Both of them were sitting comfortably and paid their money for the cost of it, then the man who runs the thing was talking to a boy and pointed to them. The Waltzer started and the boy walked over to where they were sitting.

"hi! my name is Sam, what's yours," standind looking at Carol.

Then Joan butted in and said 'My name's Joan and this is my friend Carol."

Carol stood up and shouted out "It's none of your bussiness what we're doing here, come on Joan," and got off the seat.

Joan said "I'm sorry Sam," and went after her.

Later that day Carol was walking down on the beach then saw a kite. She ran over to where it was and looked amazed when she saw it was Sam. Carol walked over to him and said "I didn't know you liked kites" as she watched him pull on the strings.

"Well, I never had enough time to tell you what I liked and what I didn't like."

"I though you only had one hoddie and that was chatting up girls. Any way, I like kites and the way it saunters into the sky and that it flys so free look at it going higher and higher in the sky."

As they were talking about kites and the freedom it has Joan was shouting Carol along the pier. When she saw Carol with Sam and ran after to them "what do you think your doing we have to get back home, it's my mother she has gone ill" so Carol said Good-bye to Sam and Joan said "hurry up Carol, I want to get home."

As they were waiting for a taxi Carol said "Sam is quite nice isn't he."

Joan snapped by saying "I thought you said he was a drip," as she was standing waiting patiently for the taxi to come.

"I never knew him and I never gave him a chance. Anyway we have to go home" Carol replyed.

They collected their stuff up then hopped on a taxi when they went past the show-ground and saw Sam and Carol said "I think I'll come back the next time and waved to Sam.

As they were on the way back home, It started to rain and Joan asked Carol about "where did you get the money."

Carol just looked into Joans face and said "I can't tell you because I will get you into trouble to and it might loose your friendship."

Boy Meets Girl Helena

Sandra and Karen are both sisters who go to the beach for an outing. Sandra was attractive lovely girl with a good personality and Karen was completely different from Sandra. She was a Tom boy who wore denim jeans and a denim jacket and acted tough with the boys.

When they were on their way to Brighton the car breaks down, but they cannot find anything wrong with it. Just then three young boys came up in there motorbykes. Sandra tries to look as if she doesn't know what she is doing with the car. Karen doesn't take much notice of them at first but then she comes out of the engine and says something cheeky to one of the bikers. And the bikers start up their bikes and drive away. Eventually they get the car fixed and get on their way to Brighton.

They were on their way down to the beach when a photographer came up to them and put a monkey on Karen's shoulder. And Karen said cheekily Right David Bailey take your little brouther off my shoulder. The photographer took the monkey off Karen's shoulder and walks away.

Then when the photographer went away Karen and Sandra starts arguing about how Karen says smart remarks to all the boys. Karen walks of in the huff. Karen decides to go for a walk along the beach. When she was walking she came across the boys that were on there motorbykes. She tried and ignored them but one of the boy came up and said to her there that girl who was acting smart the last time we meet her. So he started pushing her around. The other boy said leave her alone she's just a silly kid.

Then Eric who owned the monkey had lost it and he was looking for it. He seen what the boy was doing to Karen so he told the boy to leave her alone. The boy said and if I don't Eric shouted then you will have to deal with me if you don't. The boy walked up to Eric and Karen ran away.

She never seen him for a while. So she decided to go for a walk down to the beach. And when she got down to the beach she seen Eric trying to get the monkey. She went up to him and said "What are you doing," he replied "What does it look like." Karen said "He won't be able to come to you because his leash is stuck on the rock. You will have to go out to get him before the tide comes in.

Eric was scared but he didn't want to say so he went out and got him. When he was half way out and he said "I'm not moving from here because I'm scared." Karen said "We'll why didn't you say." He said "I thought you would laugh."

I'll come and get you so Karen went over and freed the monkey and helped Eric over. When they got over they started talking and they made friends then Karen said "I'll have to be going because Sandra will be waiting for me. So Karen said, "Goodbye and went to look for Sandra. She found Sandra sitting in the car. Karen shouted, "Hellow Sandra." Sandra said, "Where have you been?" Karen said, "I'll tell you on the way home."

Boy Meets Girl Ian

He is the middle of a 3rd and 4th year disco in Craigent High School hall where a lot of people go to enjoy themselves and it takes a while to start to heat up. Susan is a very attractive modette and has been there from the very start. It is her very first disco and she does not know a lot of people. No one has asked to dance with her because she had come on her own. She is all dressed up in her mod gear. David is very attractive looks innocent but is not. Susan has a crush on David and likes him very much. David fancies Susan but Susan does not know that. David likes Susan but he does not like her style. David is succesful with girls and has a new one every week. Not like Susan who is only had about one boyfriend.

David sees Susan and comes over and sits down. They start talking about all the things up at the hall. When the subject of music comes up and they start arguing. They argue because David likes futirists and Susan likes mod music. Finally David just got up and walked away. Susan gets up and runs to the toilet crying because she had liked David that much.

Near the end of the disco Susan got up to dance with a girl she had met when suddenly David and his friend came up to dance with them. After the dance they went to sit down. David and Susan friend were very friendly and the two of them just had to sit there. They broke the silence when David said he was sorry and Susan just looked at him in amazement and she said Oh David, am sorry too, David asked Susan out to the picture and Susan didn't hesitate in saying yes.

VII THEORY INTO PRACTICE : SECOND ATTEMPTS

As the project entered its third year and approached the final phase of classroom practice, and after two partially successful attempts with our collaborating teachers to put our theories into practice in the classroom, it was decided that the research fellow, in consultation and collaboration with the classroom teacher, should devise and implement a unit of work herself in school C with the class teacher in the observer's role. In this way, we hoped to gain further insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the procedures which we had been recommending to others by becoming more directly involved in the teaching of a class. We believed that the perceptions gained by the research fellow supplemented by the observations and feedback of the class teacher balanced the possible resultant loss of objectivity of this approach.

Having considered the evidence of our preliminary work, the project team now accepted the importance in the classroom of the following elements in the writing process:

- *supportive prewriting activities*
- *an explicit statement of criteria for success on a task formulated by teachers for the benefit of their pupils*
- *encouraging progress through the reinforcement of success*
- *strategies for enabling pupils to improve their writing through the processes of redrafting*
- *strategies for encouraging pupils to accept responsibility for their own progress*
- *the flexible management of the classroom to give advice and help to individual pupils and small groups and to allow pupils to work at different speeds*

Several of these elements had been successfully integrated into classroom practice during the previous units by the participating teachers. For instance, both teachers A and B had worked towards making their criteria for success explicit and had illustrated these criteria more or less effectively by using a model to provide pupils with visible evidence of the criteria being met. However, further development in this particular area seemed desirable. Pupils were already redrafting their writings as a matter of course but with varying degrees of success. For example, the redrafting process had not always produced tangible improvements to the quality of the text. Furthermore, the activity was teacher-intensive, very demanding in terms of teacher-time and one teacher had expressed dissatisfaction with the length of time he had spent on the one main writing task. There were varying degrees of pupil-independence observable where the pupil assumed responsibility for his/her own learning and this too seemed valuable to explore further. The teachers observed had managed their classrooms flexibly facilitating a variety of writing-related activities. One of the teachers in particular had consciously introduced pupils to deliberate strategies for remediation in consultation between drafts.

Although the research fellow assumed responsibility for planning and teaching a unit of work in this final phase, the contribution of the class teacher both at the planning stage and as critical observer throughout the unit was crucial. The work planned was subject to constraints similar to those in the previous units of work observed: that the work should be consonant with the guidelines proposed for the Development Programme at Foundation level; that there should be one main extended writing task undertaken by all the pupils; and that this piece of writing should be purposeful. In addition, since the time available for the implementation of the unit was limited, it was important that the unit should be self-contained (but that the class teacher would be able to develop it further if he should wish).

It was also decided to search for a theme which would contain writing for purposes other than those which the collaborating teachers had previously been observed teaching. The theme eventually chosen was the pupils' own experiences of secondary school and the main writing task was to be an autobiographical account of their first day at secondary school. This choice was also influenced by the accessibility of an appropriate audience, the availability of a suitable model and provision of scope for subsidiary writing tasks related to the main task. The target audience consisted of the pupils of a primary 7 class in a nearby school who were shortly to be transferring to the school (school C). The writing was to emerge from the pupil's own recollected experiences and be both reflective and informative. There was a model available in an account of a first day at secondary school contained in *A Comprehensive Education* by Roger Mills.[1] The context for the writing was to be provided by the compilation of a handbook for primary pupils giving a range of information about the school and involving a variety of language tasks. In addition, the secondary pupils could eventually meet their primary audience and present their material to them.

The essential features of the main writing task were that a model was provided as stimulus and support; the criteria for success were made explicit by the teacher and also illustrated in the model; and that a checklist for formative assessment was drawn up.

The overall strategy which the researcher and the participating teacher were going to adopt was that the researcher should manage the teaching of the class while the teacher observed, although he was free to give support to individual pupils where appropriate. In these instances the teacher and the researcher had agreed various policies, such as to avoid simply making corrections for pupils or making improvements themselves to pupils' scripts, but to attempt to guide them towards responsibility for making their own corrections and learning from them and by teaching them strategies to use to overcome their difficulties in the future.

The pupils who were taught in school C in this phase were already familiar with the researcher, since they had first been introduced eighteen months beforehand. However, it should be noted that the class was a relatively small one: out of a nominal group of fifteen S4 pupils the usual attendance was smaller. (A second trial of this unit was later implemented with a larger class of S3 pupils to test the feasibility of the procedures with a greater number of pupils.)

The research fellow discussed her plans for individual lessons with the class teacher before they were taught and they shared their perceptions of the lessons afterwards. In addition the research fellow kept detailed *post hoc* lesson notes and every lesson was audio-recorded.

It should be emphasised that although the procedures described below are the results of our prior investigations, refined through the experience of the project, the individual reader (especially the classroom teacher) is invited to consider the fine details of the practice within the procedural framework in the light of his/her individual teaching style: the following description indicates how the research fellow as one individual teacher interpreted the theoretical rationale to meet the exigencies of one classroom situation.

(a) Setting up the writing task

As described above, the writing task was set in the context of the production of a handbook for primary pupils. The initial stimulus for the unit of work, and the basis for the model of autobiographical writing which was used subsequently, was a television dramatisation of a young writer's autobiography in which he describes his first impressions of his secondary school (recorded on video-cassette from *The English Programme: Thames TV*). The pupils watched a replay of an extract from the film and the researcher then led some discussion about it. The pupils' reaction was an interested one and their responses ranged

from empathy with the narrator's experience to indication of contrast between his experience and their own. A second showing followed after the pupils had been directed to focus on one particular aspect of the narrator's description: the contrasts between his primary school and his new secondary.

The purpose of the talking which followed this second showing of the extract was to enable the pupils to begin to reflect on their own experiences. The class teacher had originally expressed doubts about his pupils' ability to do this, but in exploring these issues in interview at a later stage, he reviewed his judgement: "...after the initial 'I can't remember anything that happened', the memories did start working and associations were triggered off and a surprising amount of material arose."

To follow this preliminary sketching of the content of their writing task, the pupils were encouraged to form a clear idea of their audience. A real audience of primary seven pupils had been selected in the nearby school, who had been primed on a recent visit by the research fellow to ask questions about the secondary school which could be put to the secondary pupils. These questions had been audio-recorded and this recording was then replayed to the pupil-writers, who responded spontaneously to the freshness and interest of their questioners, which was captured in the recordings. The pupils talked about their perceptions of their audience and their own likely replies to the many questions they had asked. The theme of the unit was then introduced to the class, that they were to respond to the primary pupils by producing a handbook for them, written from a pupil's point of view to guide them through their initial days in secondary school.

The first stage in setting up the writing task, then, had been:

- *to stimulate the pupils' interest*
- *to provide a context and purpose for their writing*

- *to consider the audience for the writing*
- *to establish the point of view from which the writing was to be presented*
- *to begin to explore the subject for the writing*

(b) Pre-writing activities

The pre-writing activities were continued during the second meeting of the class when the pupils listened to more of the primary pupils' questions and discussion followed on possible ways of answering these questions, e.g. by producing lists of rules; through scripting and recording conversations about particular aspects of school; or producing diagrams of the layout of the school. The range and content of the pupils' questions were reinforced in a written list which was distributed to each pupil for reference and the pupils were directed to choose one particular area to respond to and, either working individually or in pairs or groups, to begin to plan a response.

The pupils applied themselves to these tasks, with the researcher and the teacher lending informal support where appropriate. These pieces of work upon which the pupils had embarked were to be developed throughout the unit and the pupils often turned to this work independently for variety and time-filling while waiting for formal attention concerning their main writing task. However, this aspect of the work will not be dealt with in detail in this report, since the main focus is the one common writing task which all the pupils attempted.

The main writing task was briefly introduced to the pupils at the end of a third lesson, but setting-up proper was reserved for the next full lesson. In order to make the criteria for success on the autobiographical writing task explicit, the task was broken down into its constituent elements which were organised as a checklist to present to the pupils for consideration before they began to write, and for reference during their writing.

As well as using our experience as teachers of English and currently accepted criteria for success as a resource in this task, we also referred to the model of the autobiography which was to be presented to the pupils. By analysing the elements of the writing which enabled it to be "successful autobiographical writing" we were able to generalise from it to produce an explicit statement of criteria for success on the task we intended to set the pupils. The checklist (Appendix Nine at the end of this chapter)* was organised under the categories of *Subject; Point of View; Register; Organization* and *Mechanics*. This choice of categories, their nomenclature and the order in which they were placed are of course open to variation by the individual teacher, but were deliberately chosen in this instance to suit the requirements of the task and the pupils. For example, so that surface features would not appear to assume priority over the other elements of the task, the "mechanics" category was placed at the end of the checklist.

The pupils were introduced to the writing task itself through the medium of the written model, which had been transcribed from the videotape but had originally been adapted from the first chapter of *My Comprehensive Education*[1]. The text (Appendix Ten at the end of this chapter)* was distributed to the pupils and it was read through in class. Firstly, various features of the subject-matter, point of view and register were highlighted in a discussion led by the researcher. Then a "cognitive map" was compiled of the text by the researcher on the blackboard with contributions for its completion coming from the pupils. In order to reinforce visually the two important features of the content, that is both the events which made up the experience and how the author was affected by them were included in the text, the map which appeared on the blackboard showed two different shapes juxtaposed to represent the events and the associated feelings.

As a prelude to producing maps to help in planning the writing of

* see pages 190 and 191

their own autobiographies, the pupils were then encouraged to share their memories about that first day at secondary school. Despite initial protestations from a few pupils at this point, the group responded well to this; they seemed to enjoy this exercise in group recall and the discussion was lively and interested. Having pooled some of their thoughts, the pupils were then asked to compile a cognitive map to suit their subject-matter using the display on the blackboard as a model.

To illustrate the progress and development of the writing task in this class, we will again present and comment upon what one pupil in particular, Joseph, produced. The teacher's perception of Joseph was that he usually had difficulty in maintaining his concentration on a piece of writing in order to make improvements through redrafting. However, in this case he did persevere through three drafts to a final version which met the criteria for success on the task.

Joseph's first experience of secondary school was unique in the class since he had been on holiday with his family during the first week of the school term. However this brought him closer to the experience of the author of *My Comprehensive Education*. Joseph's plan (Fig. 1), produced with some support from the researcher and reference to his peers, shows his grasp of the necessity to link the historical events to his reaction to them at the time. For example, we find in the brief "Finding out my classes - STUPID" a vivid memory of his embarrassment and awkwardness due to having missed the first week which he eventually expanded in several ways through his drafts. Several amendments were made by Joseph to this cognitive map with the help of the researcher and his fellow pupils. For example, "excited" is misspelt and subsequently corrected in one of the circles. Joseph recognised that there was an error ("eccited"?) and asked the research fellow how to spell it. In accordance with the policy agreed between researcher and class teacher for correcting mistakes such as this, he was not merely given the

Fig. 1

Joseph
My first day at school
leaving primary
SAD
missed teer
worried
getting out at lunchtime
great
meeting first teacher
wondering how they teach
new surroundings
excited
meeting teacher
FIRST DAY
lessons changing
worried scared
teachers arrived
wondering what is going to be in your class
following someone
Anxious
excited
excited
finding my classes
STUPID
Excited
Anxious
Anxious
excite

correct spelling, but shown a strategy for learning it - "Look, image, cover, write".[2] He later put the strategy into practice independently with the word "anxious", using his neighbour as a resource. A test of whether the strategy had helped in consolidating the spellings might have been whether he wrote the words correctly in his subsequent drafts, but unfortunately neither "excited" nor "anxious" appeared again, although the excitement and the anxiety are conveyed by other means. Secondly, "meeting rector" was amended by Joseph to "meeting assistant rector" when one of the group remembered aloud that the new rector had not taken up his appointment until a few weeks into that first term. However in his drafts, Joseph merely used the Assistant Rector's name without further identification.

At the next meeting of the class the researcher distributed copies of the checklist (Appendix Nine) to pupils. The form of the checklist had been fully discussed during the planning of the unit with the class teacher who expressed concern about two particular aspects of it: the inclusion of the category sub-headings "Subject", "Register" etc., and the sequential appearance of the checklist. The teacher anticipated that the use of the sub-headings in the checklist, some of which were unfamiliar to the pupils, might introduce an unnecessary difficulty for the pupils in having to learn the new terms and to apply them. However, since the terms were glossed in the text of the checklist, in order to discover whether there was in fact any added difficulty due to the inclusion of sub-headings, we decided to retain them and monitor carefully their use by the pupils and teachers. In examining this issue with the class teacher in interview after the completion of the writing task it was apparent that the pupils neither expressed nor showed signs that the sub-headings had caused confusion to them. In addition, both the researcher and the teacher made frequent reference to the category headings in their interaction with the pupils and there is a record of the pupils using the terms independently. This was the first time that the pupils had encountered this

format and we can speculate that familiarity with the procedure might lead to them internalising the structure and to them incorporating the terms into their vocabulary for discussing their writing. The second reservation of the teacher, that the numbering of the items on the checklist might mislead the pupils into treating the items as "questions" and answering them as in the conventional interpretation exercise was taken into account in its visual representation. Only one pupil did attempt to "answer the questions" but quickly encountered difficulties, referred to the researcher for help and was successfully redirected.

The checklist was introduced to the pupils as a guide to the criteria for success on the writing task which could be used both as an aid to the writing and for reference by the pupils themselves and their teacher during formative assessment. The checklist was presented in two parts: "Subject", "Point of View" and "Register" firstly as being of relevance to that particular writing task: and "Organization" and "Mechanics" as relevant to writing tasks in general. (There was an inconsistency here; under "Organization" was included an instruction on how to begin this particular task which was not generalisable. This was relocated under "Subject" for the second trial of the unit).

Each element of the checklist was introduced separately and the researcher expanded its text to provide added support to the pupils. In addition there was an opportunity to explore the application of each category to the writing task. For example, in considering "register":

Research Fellow: *How are you going to write to make sure... they (the primary pupils) understand what you mean?*

Pupil: *To keep it simple.*

Pupil: *They won't understand big words. If you've got words that they'll no understand it won't mean nothing to them.*

Pupil: *Give them lots of information.*

etc.

The pupils expressed concern about two areas of their wri g at this point: paragraphing (under "Organization") and hand ting (under "Mechanics"). For example, in talking about the erence in the checklist to writing in paragraphs, one pupil said...I don't write many" and another, "I forget to put them in." Likewise the doubts expressed about their ability to write ney: "I can't write...I'm not a good writer", and another pupi holding up her writing, "I can't get it smaller than that tried...but it always goes like that."

(c) Classroom organization and management

The pupils then set about their writing task without appnt difficulty and the researcher spent the remainder of thesson in individual consultation with a pupil who had returnedter an absence and had therefore missed the crucial prewritistage. This in turn highlighted an important management problemhow can the teacher cater adequately for absent pupils who h returned at the same time as the rest of the class? Furmore, if pupils fall absent and return irregularly in the courof a writing task, how can the teacher use his/her time most economically to cater for these pupils?

In an attempt to answer these questions, the researcher ised a package containing the stimulus material in the forms audio-recording and written material which was intended for pus' individual use, under supervision, in the classroom. Ily, in this case, the pupils who had been absent would have access to the video film which was used as stimulus, buten booking procedures for the VCR and disruption of the clawere taken into account a compromise was struck and the stimu material was transferred to audio tape (a replay machineth listening headsets was available); skeletal cognitive m were presented for the model and the pupils' version (Appendileven);*

* see page 192

the checklist was included; and the whole package was supplemented by simple oral instructions edited onto the audio-tape. The strategy in this case proved successful since the pupil with whom it was piloted proceeded to produce his first draft with little extra reference to the teacher for help.

During the writing unit the pattern of management was a flexible one. After the initial stages of setting-up the writing task the researcher seldom addressed the class as a whole, except for details of administration such as checking attendance, settling down to work (although on several occasions the pupils entered the classroom, fetched their scripts and began to write without a word), and making arrangements for the visit to primary school. The pupils worked mainly individually, but worked in pairs to compare and check their scripts. While the pupils wrote, the researcher monitored their work informally by going round the class; formally through written comments on their assessment profile sheets (discussed in detail later) supported by oral comments; and responded where possible to individual requests for help. Although the small size of the class should be borne in mind, this pattern was effective in that there was no evidence, from the researcher's perception or the class teacher's observations, to suggest that pupils were ever at a loss for something to do, on the occasions when they were obliged to wait for attention, the subsidiary tasks were available to sustain their interest. On two occasions, the class had access to a room which facilitated a small group discussion while others worked individually in booths, with audio recordings of the stimulus material or the individual package for those who had missed the pre-writing activities through absence.

Most of the pupils had finished their pieces of writing, ready to present to the primary pupils within seven lessons. After the visit to the primary school the researcher was not able to spend more time with the class (the time was approaching for them to review their two years' work at pilot Foundation level and

compile it into a folio for assessment) and it was unfortunately not possible to pursue all of the subsidiary writing tasks to completion.

However, a closer study of one pupil's work on the main writing task will reveal the procedures followed, some of the strategies adopted and the development of his work through three drafts.

(d) Case Study: Joseph's Progress

Joseph wrote his first draft within a single period and with some relief announced that he had finished. (Fig. 2 = first draft). This draft was some one hundred and twenty words long and seemed to reflect the likely flow of his work; he began to write slowly in a style of writing where many of the letters are well formed and often separate from each other, but his script became larger and more fluent (if less controlled) as he progressed. The final flourish perhaps reflects his sense of completion. However, the script was not produced without reflection; there is evidence of review in the amendments which were made, in, for example, line 5, where "drove" has been altered and in line 15 an alteration has been made to the initial letter of "after" to mark the beginning of a new sentence. He was already on his way to meeting several of the criteria for success: his point of view was appropriate; his concept of register is sound and he seems to have grasped his sense of audience and addresses his readers directly in, for example, "...not a soul that used to be in your old class"; he had met the criterion of length; and the mechanical aspects of his writing, while demonstrating some minor weaknesses in spelling, are acceptable.

However, he had not fulfilled the promise of his planning map and it is interesting to compare this with the first draft to explore the differences. In his map, Joseph had drawn eleven boxes to represent events, with circles attached to represent the associated feelings. Yet in his text, Joseph described four of

Fig. 2

JOSEPH

I woke up this morning to find it
was my first day at High school.
I had been away on holiday
So I missed the tour. My
dad drove me to school
and took me to the
office where me came
and showed me to my
first class. It was very
strange to walk into the
door and find every body
working and not a soul
in the class that used
to be in your old
class. After all the classes
I didn't know what
to do, somebody told me
to go to reception I went
but at first I dint know
what reception was it
was just a class room where
they took the register
in. I would say that this is
better than primary school
here you grow up faster.

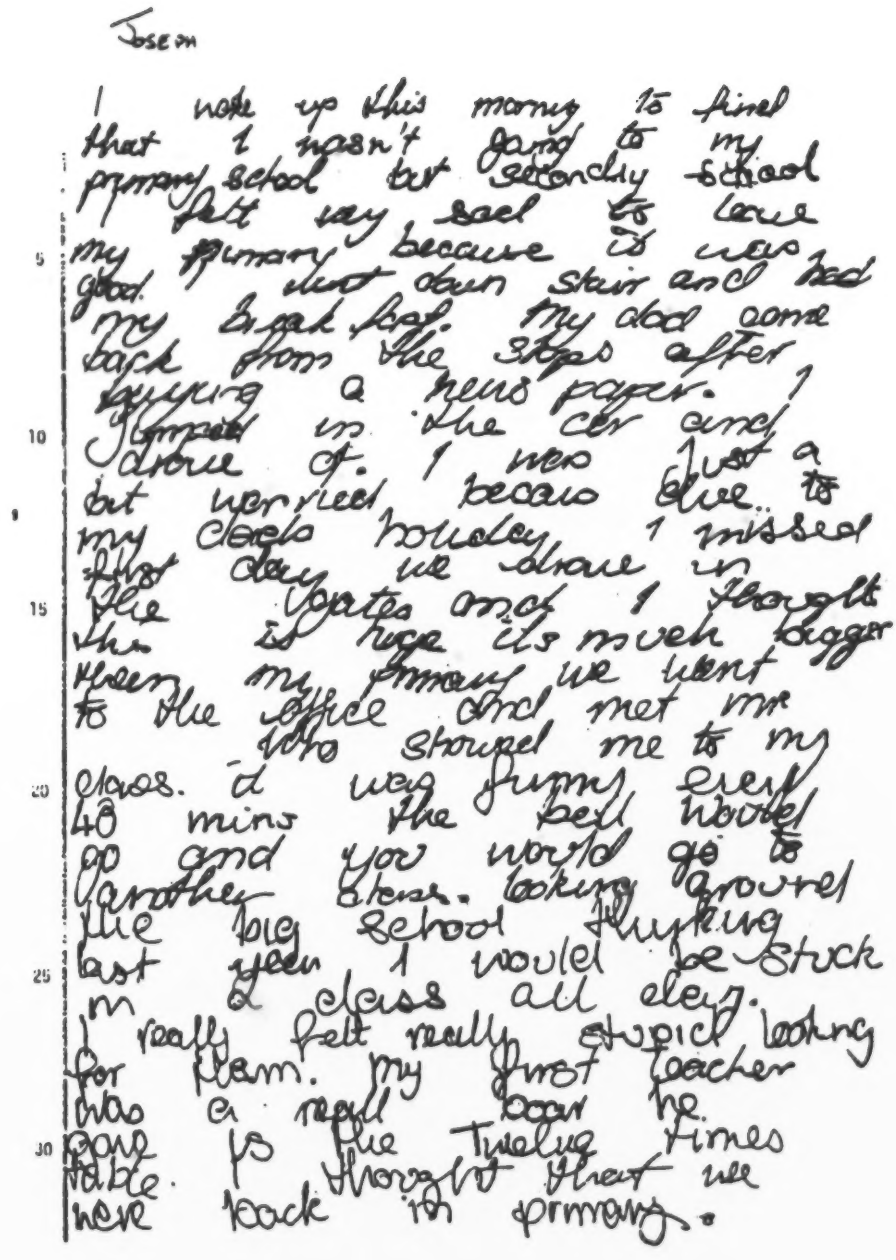
he events which he had noted and only two of those were ccompanied by their related feelings, although he had written bout six events in all, three of which included some reflection. owever, there is a quality in these reflections which has eveloped during this first stage of the writing. For example, the insight conveyed in his final sentence, "I would say that this is better than primary school, here you grow up faster" is new and one might speculate that the process of writing his first draft had contributed to Joseph's awareness of his own experience and that the writing itself had stimulated his thinking.

In terms of organization, Joseph's structure shows a logical progression through the text but his marking of sentence units shows a certain weakness and paragraph boundaries are not marked at all.

The researcher responded to Joseph's work in the next lesson by indicating to him several particularly valuable points in his writing, such as "It was very strange to walk into the class and find everybody working and not a soul in the class that used to be in your old class"; and "at first I didn't know what registration was..."; and also his last sentence. Secondly, she tried to encourage Joseph to compare his initial map to his first draft, to discriminate between what he had been proposing to write and what he had actually written. This was done by suggesting that he number the elements of his map (about eleven) in order to be able to check off their inclusion in his autobiography. In addition he was reminded of one of the most interesting aspects of his experience, that it was unique in his class in that he had missed the introductory week at the secondary school.

Joseph proceeded to redraft his work during this period and produced draft 2 (see figure 3).

Fig. 3



Joseph

I woke up this morning to find
that I wasn't going to my
primary school but secondly school
felt very sad to leave
my primary because it was
good. I went down stair and had
my breakfast. My dad came
back from the shops after
buying a news paper. I
jumped in the car and
drove of. I was just a
bit worried because I'll be
my class today. I missed
first day we drove in
the gates and I thought
the is huge its much bigger
than my primary we went
to the office and met mr
who showed me to my
class. It was funny first
40 mins the bell would
go and you would go to
another class. looking around
the big school thinking
last year I would be stuck
in a class all day.
I really felt really stupid looking
for them. my first teacher
was a real bear he
gave us the Twelve times
table. I thought that we
were back in primary.

This second draft was longer, at one hundred and sixty words, than the first. He also made several additions to the subject-matter: "I went downstair and had my breakfast"; "we drove in the gates and I thought this is huge..."; and "my first teacher was a reall boar..." This last addition probably arose from a conversation between Joseph, a fellow pupil and the class teacher during the prewriting stage, which he recalled for the second draft. As a further response to the researcher's suggestions for improvement he supplied the reflective additions to several of the first drafts: for example he added "I felt very sad" to his description because of his realisation that he had left primary school; the description of the journey to school was expanded and complemented by further reflections; and his first experiences of classes were expanded and accompanied by different reflections.

Joseph also missed out three elements of his first draft in his redrafting: he missed out his perceptions that everybody was already working when he arrived in class; that he was confused when told to go to registration; and his perception that "here you grow up faster".

However, his point of view has been strengthened by the additional reflective material. For example, the emphasis expressed in "I really felt really stupid" firmly reinforces the personal viewpoint and reaches out to the audience for empathy.

There is also a slight alteration of style in this second draft; it is less personal and perhaps more akin to the original model. For example, the form of expression "due to my dad's holiday" is closer to Roger Mills' words than Joseph's first rendering of this in the previous draft: "I had been away on holiday..." Joseph has also refined his style into a more formal register in "we went to the office and met Mr who showed me to my class" which he had earlier expressed in this way: "My dad...took me to the ofice wher Mr came and showed me to my first class".

As in his earlier work, although the pupil organised his work in a logical sequence, he did not mark paragraph boundaries. However, in this version there is a cohesive weakness to the text. For example, "I missed first day..." shows the definite article simply missed out which interrupts the flow of the sentence. But another example of lack of syntactic cohesion disrupts the sense of the written text for the reader: "looking around the ig school thinking last year I would be stuck in a class all day" is preceded by a full-stop (although no capital appears at "looking") and is followed by a full-stop, clearly indicating that the writer intended this to be a separate sentence unit. In fact, the "sentence" seems much closer in form and register to spoken rather than written language. Another example of an error in conveying sense occurs where he creates an illogicality by omitting the pronoun 'we' in "I jumped in the car and drove of".

As far as mechanical aspects are concerned, once again Joseph's writing is fluent but seems to demonstrate a slowing up towards the end: "...who showed me..." is once again in a more upright, disjointed hand. The writing ends perhaps conveniently at the foot of an A4 page.

None of the spelling mistakes apparent in the first draft reappear although two of the three words misspelt, "somebody" and "registration" do not appear at all in the second draft. However, there are six new unconventional spellings, none of them intrusive to the reader's understanding of the text.

Before Joseph made any substantial changes to draft 2, another kind of response to his work was provided in the form of a writing conference involving several pupils, Joseph and the researcher. The group began this work by reviewing the criteria for success on the task contained in the checklist. Joseph then read out his composition (draft 2) to the group. The first comment from a pupil was a commendation of the humour that Joseph had included in his account. Secondly they were appreciative of the length of the piece: "It's short, not too long."

Interestingly the first point made referred to a quality not referred to in the criteria specified for success, yet obviously contributed to the overall effect of the piece. It did not, however, seem reasonable to specify "humour" as a minimum criterion of success for this task; the humour in this particular account was an added bonus. Joseph was also praised for conveying how he had felt having missed the start of school, and his reaction to his first teacher.

Using these several points to encourage Joseph through reinforcing his success, the researcher then indicated one point which required clarification: the non-sense of "I jumped in the car and drove of". When Joseph first read his composition aloud, he had corrected himself when he reached this point and the researcher used this as a reference:

RF *When you were beginning to read it out, the bit where you came to getting in the car...you corrected yourself because you said something different from what you had written down. I know, you said, "When my father came back from the shops he said, 'Jump in the car'." Right? Then you changed it when you looked at it and you said, "We jumped in the car".*

Joseph (reading) *"I jumped in the car and drove off."*

The researcher offered this problem to the rest of the group for solution:

RF *What did that sound like?*

Pupil(s) *That he jumped in the car and drove off.*

Joseph was then left to sort this out at a later stage, giving him the responsibility for amending his work in the light of the group's comments.

The researcher then directed the pupils to consider Joseph's work with reference to the checklist:

RF *Let's look carefully at what Joseph has done. Let's look at the checklist...Has he got the subject right? Has he described how he felt and what happened to him on his first day at school...?*

C. *Yes... he did describe it but it was not much... about the school*

RF *Has he included what he felt?*

C. *He included what he felt.*

RF *What did he mention about the school?*

J. *...that it's huge.*

RF *Anything else about the school?*

J. *It's awful short... there's no much there, somehow.*

RF *And yet you said at the beginning...*

J. *I know but... there isn't much about the school, Miss, it's all about how he felt and what happened to him.*

This exchange is interesting again in that the pupils while acknowledging that he has fulfilled the letter of the checklist are bringing other criteria to bear on their assessment. The researcher's reaction was to continue to reinforce Joseph's success, but also to recognise the other pupils' criticisms and offer them as viable suggestions for improvement to Joseph, although there was no requirement in the checklist to do so:

RF *What is there is good, we first of all thought it was quite to the point. Joseph, do you think you might want to add something more about the school?*

On reflection this was not a productive strategy, although the point having been raised Joseph defended his work competently:

RF (to Joseph) *Do you think you might want to add something more about the school?*

Joseph *No.*

RF *Why not?*

Joseph *What I said about the school is forty minutes and... it's a big school... and I was talking about the primary school... talking about the teacher being boring.*

This tendency for the assessors, in this case the pupils, to introduce new criteria for success into their assessment at this

stage in the process had been noted during previous classroom observation of other participating teachers at work. The problem could be overcome in several ways. The new criteria could be declared to be invalid and withdrawn (which perhaps is unreasonable); the new criteria could be discussed with the pupils for inclusion in the checklist. In this instance, the strategy of reminding the pupil that he had ultimate responsibility for his writing was employed and we will see what Joseph's response was in due course.

The remainder of the exchange shows Joseph becoming irritated by the critical comments from the group.

RF *What sort of things would you like to see added to that, J----? (to Joseph) You've plenty of time to do it.*

Joseph *Not a lot.*

J. (Reacting to some non-verbal communication from Joseph and appealing to the teacher) *He's putting me off. Em... How did he come to know about his lessons? He never mentioned anything about the timetables... timetable or anything.*

Joseph *I said every forty, every forty-five minutes... every forty minutes you get out again.*

J. *Aye but, how are they going to make that out - they (the primary audience) dinnae ken that. They sit in a classroom a' day, Joseph, they dinnae have lessons like us here. They'll no' understand that.....*

.....

RF *Anything from anybody else? Any other comment?*

C. *He could put in more about other classes... other classes as well, not just one class teacher but some, several...*

RF *You would like a little bit more... Do you think you could do that, talk about more classes than just the one?*

Joseph *I cannae mind them all.*

The group then discussed whether Joseph should write that a teacher had been boring and suggestions were offered for more tactful alternatives to this. They then acknowledged his appropriateness of point-of-view and register in all but his references to the timetable and class changes.

The question of organisation arose when the researcher quoted a phrase which Joseph had written and tried to indicate the content for him to review it:

RF (to Joseph) *Could you read it just...I was going to say the first paragraph but you haven't actually.....*

Joseph *I haven't got any.*

RF *No. ...or at least you haven't marked them.*

Again the follow-up was intended to build on what Joseph had achieved and point to the way forward:

RF *When you read it out you split it up rather nicely.*

On returning to the checklist the group then proceeded to consider "Mechanics". The researcher suggested that the group was not in a position to comment on the visual aspects of Joseph's writing because he had been reading aloud from his text and they could not all see it. However, his near neighbour offered this:

A. *Nobody wants to look at Joseph's writing.....*
RF *Why not?*
A. *It's horrible.*
Joseph *It's a' right.*
A. *It's a' right...it's just that...*
J. *It's up and doon...*
RF *What do you mean?*
J. *It's up and doon...*
A. *Half o' it's going across the page and half of it's...*

(But this pupil then modified his comments by self-criticism...)

A. *I cannae say nothing because mine's is the same.*

RF *Well there do seem to be a couple of different angles in it. Does that make it horrible?*

A. *No' really.*

The researcher then directed the pupils' attention to the relevant criterion in the checklist:

RF *Look what it says in the checklist about handwriting...the very last sentence. "Your handwriting must be clear enough so that your reader will be able to understand it without having to ask you what you mean."*

J. *You see primary school will no' understand that...I dinnae even understand that.*

RF (to Joseph) *So there are particular points that you may have to work on to get your writing a little bit clearer.*

However, Joseph seemed to have had enough of criticism by now:

Joseph *Can somebody else no' read? I'm getting fed up of accuse...accusated...or something. Accusations, that's it.*

It seemed important then to allay these feelings in Joseph and set him back to his work more positively which the researcher attempted to do.

Certainly, Joseph's work had received a great deal of comment, most of it eventually constructive. Perhaps, however, this kind of group concentration on one pupil's work is an activity which might be tackled only once in a unit of work, with a pupil who would react positively to the criticism of his work, to demonstrate the kind of focussed discussion which pupils could engage in in their pairs or small groups or the kind of internal dialogue necessary for self-assessment. In this case, although Joseph expressed that he had had enough of the exercise he eventually went on to apply several of the suggested improvements to his own work and brought several of the criticisms first levelled at his work to bear constructively upon the work of a fellow-pupil in pair discussion which followed, some of which is reproduced below. Joseph and his partner (pupil A) recorded the conversation they had when they were directed to work together on the partner's composition.

A. (to Joseph) *Right what do you want me to take oot and put in?*

Joseph *Right, I would like you where it says...'After filling in our timetables we sat in the class for a period...' you could say how long a period is because if they hear a bell then could think it's the fire alarm... Maybe they don't know what the periods are like, so you could say how long the periods are.*

A. *Right, I'll put in how long the periods are, right.*

Joseph *And there was another one. 'and it was very exciting because everybody was pushing...' Well maybe it's no exciting to them because they could lose their concentration going up and doon the stairs, like turning roon for if anybody pushed them they could fall. So you could maybe say something like 'rushing'.*

A. *Aye, 'rushing', right.*

Joseph *And up here you could put some more information where it says, 'When we first got into the class we just got used to the teacher and the teacher was taking our names. When the day was over I was very happy. I knew my father was waiting to give me a run home in the car.' You should maybe gie some more information about what you thought your timetable was, you ken.*

A. *Well, I'll just have to write it out again and put in the things...*

Joseph *...You havenae mentioned your register classroom. You could say what (it is) because they havenae got registration or anything.*

A. *I have so. Aye, 'after we filled in our timetable we sat in the class for a period, then we went to our first class'.*

Joseph *'We went to our first class', but you never said nothing about the 'reggie' because they havenae got registration o'er there and you could say what it's like.*

Their conversation had been a wide-ranging one, examining issues of subject, register and mechanics, and there is evidence in the above transcription that they (especially Joseph) had modelled their discussion on the foregoing group discussion

Between that lesson and the following one, the researcher, consultation with the class teacher, compiled the open gri profile already referred to in Section (c) for use during formative assessment. (See figure 4). The profile foll the framework of the checklist to fulfil several purposes. In order to gather data on each individual's progress through drafts it was desirable that the pupils' scripts should pr evidence of their own work and not be confused with the te intervention. Any written comments were therefore made o separate sheet of paper. The desirability of making writ comments was apparent in the need for prompt feedback to t pupils as they returned to their scripts at the beginning each class. It was also seen to be important that these formative comments should be in the more permanent mode of writing so that pupils could refer to them more than once during the process of redrafting. Written comments there fulfilled both of these aims: that of prompt feedback and permanence. In addition the format of the profile, based was on the checklist, provided a checklist in turn for the teacher in assessing the work. In practice it also provi an easily accessed record of the pupil's progress and teac response in the course of individual consultations during lesson. The amount of time spent on filling in the profi no longer than would have been spent on writing comments o pupil's script, since similar decisions about the number o for further work for any one draft would be taken using th method of recording instructions as that of writing direct onto the pupils' paper. Furthermore, there was the added provision for a response from the pupils to the teacher's comments, which was used by some of the pupils even on the trial of the strategy.

The nature of the response to Joseph's work was first of provide encouragement and then to indicate possible areas improvement. Following the writing of draft two, then, researcher commended aspects of the subject-matter, the p view and register while suggesting some improvements to th

PROFILE FOR ASSESSMENT

Name: Joseph

Date: 1.3.93

Writing task: Autobiography Draft Number: 2

	Teacher's Comments	Work for next draft 3	Pupil's Questions/Comments
SUBJECT	Your 2nd draft is more like your plan but you have missed out some good points.	Compare drafts 1 and 2 and use up all your information from 1 and 2 for draft 3.	
POINT OF VIEW	Good.		
REGISTER	Can you improve on: "I jumped in and drove off."? I'm sure the primary pupils will enjoy reading this.		
MECHANICS	Paragraphs need a bit of work!	Try using your plan to help you with this. Each time you come to a new topic from your plan take a new paragraph.	
	Spelling: Check the meaning of 'boar' in the dictionary	Make sure you write Mr Connor 'bore' in draft 3.	

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content, register, organization and spelling. The suggested way forward regarding the subject, was to "compare drafts 1 and 2 and use up all your information from 1 and 2 for draft 3." And for organization: "Try using your plan to help you (to work on your paragraphs). Each time you come to a new topic from your plan, take a new paragraph". Under the heading of "Mechanics", the entries were "Teacher's Comments: Spelling: check the meaning of 'boar' in the dictionary. Work for next draft: Make sure you write the correct 'boar' in draft 3."

In the next lesson the profile was introduced to the pupils as a visual record of their success and a guide to improving their subsequent drafts. Their attention was also drawn to the "pupil comment" column and they were invited to note any questions or comments which they wanted to make. In Joseph's case, all the comments which had previously been made to him orally were produced in written form on the profile sheet (see Fig. 4). During the lesson, he worked studiously on the redrafting of his work, occasionally referring to his partner to help him. During this lesson the researcher spent most of her time with other members of the class, in particular with one pupil who had been working on the individual package and had encountered a problem which he found difficult to resolve.

The next lesson was once again held in a small informal room which facilitated individual tape-work and flexibility in organization for the pupils who could work individually or in pairs or groups as they wished. During this lesson, Joseph wrote draft three with close reference to the written profile and several references to his partners and the researcher.

As the lesson progressed the researcher noticed Joseph's quizzical perusal of the assessment profile and came to his assistance:

Joseph *I've to compare these two (drafts one and two), put the ideas that were in there (draft one) in there (draft three). But they are in there (draft two).*

RF *They're not <u>all</u> in there.*

Joseph *What have I missed oot?*

RF *Well, let's look at them quite carefully. You've got the 'woke up in the morning'? right. 'You'd been away on holiday'?*

Joseph *Oh I forgot to put that in... No.*

RF *Maybe you put it in a bit later. There's your holiday, so that's O.K. "...strange to walk to the class..."*

Joseph *No.*

RF *Right, put a wee cross to remind you. "After all the classes we didn't know what to do." "Somebody told me to go to registration..."*

Joseph *No.*

RF *So maybe you should include that as well. "(You maybe) weren't sure where registration was..." Good.*

Now there, I thought that was a great idea, that last one: "This is better than primary school here because you grow up faster." You didn't put that in there (second draft).

Joseph *No.*

RF *So that's those three things you could usefully include in your third draft because that's something that the primary pupils would be interested in.*

The next important interchange between the researcher and Joseph was simply a check on his progress:

RF *How's it going?*
I'm just about finished. I've just got to write the rest of that paragraph.

However, what is particularly interesting is that Joseph uses the term "paragraph" in reference to his work, which was indeed arranged in paragraphs for this third draft whereas draft two contained no

Paragraph markers. When he had finished, the researcher drew attention to this, and referred to Joseph's first comment when he had the checklist, which seemed to have been protestation that he would be unable to fulfil the condition of organizing his work into paragraphs.

RF *Do you remember what you said to me that you wouldn't be able to do?*

Joseph *Wouldn't be able to do?*

RF *You said you wouldn't be able to do something.*

Joseph *No.*

RF *You said, 'I can't write in paragraphs.'*

Joseph *I said I didnae write in paragraphs.*

RF *I see, but you have done this time, haven't you?*

He was making an interesting (and obviously meaningful) distinction between "can't" and "don't", or at least in this case "don't until the final draft".

Joseph was certainly indicating that this was his last draft. For example, he asked if he could have his work typed out, because "it's no neat". And when asked to review his work with a friend said he would, but probably wouldn't make any changes because he found it "boring" to redraft; "I kent part o' it aff by heart." However, his resolve weakened when it was proposed that he might want to amend his work after getting a response from the primary pupils, and in consultation with A. and the researcher, made some minor amendments to draft 3 (Fig. 5) with close reference to the checklist.

The researcher filled in another profile form for Joseph's final draft (Fig. 6), specifying several minor adjustments which required to be made but mainly reinforcing the success which he had achieved. Joseph's only other reference to the researcher was towards the end of the next period when he required clarification of what was meant by an entry under "Mechanics - Ask for next draft". It emerged that the question mark referred

Fig. 5

DRAFT 3.

Joseph

I woke up this morning to find that I was'nt going to my primary school But secondary school.

I felt very sad to leave my primary because it was good fun. I went down stair's and had my breakfast. My dad came back from the shops after buying a newspaper. We jumped in the car and drove off. I was just a bit worried about going into my new class.

Due to my dad's holiday I missed the first week and the tour.

We drove in the gates I thought this was huge. Every body was going about as it it's no bother to them but there are not thinking are helping other people to find out where there class room is.

My dad took me up to the office and met me who showed me to my class room.

It was funny every 40min a bell would go and you would go to a cliffernt class. Looking about the big school thinking last year I would be on a class all day every day. The time was 3.45 every body told me to go to registration, I what or where

was regestration? I finally got to
it. In the class rooms I
felt realy stupid every body was
looking at me as if I wer daft.
My first teacher was a
night here he gave us the twelve
times table, I thought I was back
at primary. Gog home I thought
B myself you grow up much quicker
at secondary

2

PROFILE FOR ASSESSMENT

Name: Megan

Date: 2-3-93

Writing task: Autobiography Draft Number: 3

	Teacher's Comments	Work for next draft	Pupil's Questions/Comments
SUBJECT	You have done what is asked by using all your information from steps 1 and 2.	Should you begin your next topic further into your story than this?	I do agree with that because when I was writing I was trying to put [illegible]
POINT OF VIEW	Good.		
REGISTER	You have managed to keep your tone appropriate.		
PUNCTUATION	Well done. Your paragraphing has made a good improvement.		
MECHANICS	You will have checking to do by the time you have your final draft. Use your words.	Use of "up" [illegible] Use of "down" [illegible] For the page it "appropriate" [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]	I didn't know what [illegible]

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to was missing from a sentence which started on his page one and finished on page two, whereas the original indication was that the sentence appeared on page one. Joseph took advantage of the "Pupil comments" column to record this exchange with the researcher. Once Joseph had made these few changes to his script he acknowledged that his composition was finished. The pupil's achievement was then recorded on a summative assessment profile, (Appendix Twelve),* which was compiled to try to provide a statement of their success on the writing task.

There then remained the presentation of his autobiography to the audience of primary pupils. The class visited the neighbouring primary school and were introduced to the primary seven pupils who had been audio-recorded; they distributed copies of their work amongst the pupils and read out their own pieces of work. Joseph's performance in this situation was commendable; his reading was fluent and confident and he answered the pupils' questions which followed fully and thoughtfully. The class teacher who was also present was impressed with his (and the rest of the class's) response to the demands of the task.

Although it might have been desirable to develop the pupils' work in the light of the experience of presenting their work to their real audience, it was not possible through pressure of time to do this in this instance. However, the class's scripts, together with those subsequently produced by the third year class with whom the researcher then worked on the same unit, were compiled into a booklet, copies of which were sent to the collaborating primary school. In addition Joseph's autobiography was one of two from this class which was published in the school magazine. (A small selection of the final drafts written by other pupils is included at the end of this chapter as Appendix Thirteen.)*

* see pages 193 and 194

(e) Discussion

In implementing this unit of work we had been seeking answers to the following main questions:

- Was it possible in the pre-writing phase to develop the teacher's statement of the criteria for success on the main writing task and to use a written model or exemplar of success more explicitly?
- Was it possible to engage pupils in the processes of redrafting in such a way that clear progress could be demonstrated to them as a result of their efforts? (Earlier experience with Teacher B indicated that this could be so)
- How could the teacher's time (both inside and outwith the classroom) be used most effectively and economically in the course of the pupils' attempts to draft and redraft their work?

In this chapter we have produced some evidence to indicate that in the context described the checklist of criteria for success produced by the researcher and teacher proved to be a successful pre-writing strategy for clarifying both the nature of the writing task to be undertaken and the nature of success in completing it. The written model, mediated initially through whole class discussion and later through discussion with individuals and small groups, also appeared to provide an important measure of support in clarifying the objectives of the task for both researcher/teacher and pupils. Both checklist and model were also frequently referred to by both researcher/teacher and pupils to guide and exemplify throughout the processes of drafting and redrafting.

As a result we see the checklist as a potentially successful, flexible strategy, adaptable in accordance with the aims of the teacher using it and the nature of the task it delineates. In practice, however, we found it impossible to anticipate in advance all the problems that emerged as pupils tackled the writing task and difficult, too, to make explicit in our initial

statement all the criteria for success which existed "inside our heads". It seems important to accept, therefore, that the checklist may develop in the course of use (provided that it does not become overburdened with detail).

In presenting the case-study of Joseph's progress we have shown how one pupil worked through three successive drafts towards his final successful version, making changes to his work that were varied in nature and which covered most of the dimensions of the researcher's checklist. In making these revisions he appeared to be influenced by the checklist itself and the model of success, the advice of the researcher/teacher (presented in both oral and written forms) and the comments of his peers.

The checklist, model and peer discussion also helped to ensure that the teacher's time in the classroom was employed economically and effectively. Making use of checklist and model in the ways described above, pupils were able to work independently (but with support) towards their goal. Although the written outcomes in this unit were perhaps less varied than in other traditional contexts in English, the evidence of pupils' final scripts (Appendix Thirteen)* indicates that individuality was not lost in the course of the procedures adopted.

In the context described, while pupils worked on the main task, the researcher/teacher was free to give in-depth help to individual pupils (not merely to Joseph) by means of writing "interviews" and additional help in the form of written comments in the assessment profiles instead of traditional correction procedures. Both researcher and observing class teacher agreed that the strengths of the formative profile seemed to be its permanence (giving written as well as oral feedback to pupils); its basis on the criteria for success; the limited space for teacher comment (to prevent over-burdening the pupil on each redraft); its value as a commentary on each draft which could be included with the scripts in the folios of pupils' work for

* see page 194

scrutiny by an external moderator; and the possibility of transferring some of the information to a summative profile.

What remains for comment in the discussion of this phase of our work is the nature of the management skills required of the teacher in initially organizing these procedures and in implementing them in the classroom. There is no doubt that the procedures described are thorough and systematic and that they require confident and purposeful management on the part of the teacher. Needless to say, in the contexts investigated management proved less demanding in the case of the small S4 class than in the case of the larger S3 class. None the less, management of the procedures was feasible with the larger class (maximum attendance 20 pupils) and it is important to remember that although both classes were comparatively small in size, the individuals in them were on the whole more difficult to control and direct than in other larger classes.

(f) Summary

In this chapter we have described the final phase of our classroom work seeking to illuminate those aspects of the project's theoretical rationale which had proved problematic in our previous attempts (described in Chapter 6) - that is, the production in writing of explicit criteria for success on a task, the progress of pupils towards visible success as they revised successive drafts of their work, and the effective management of individual help during writing. We have described the context and purposes of the unit of work that was implemented together with the pre-writing and management strategies (including procedures for assessment) adopted by the teacher/researcher. In addition we have presented a detailed case-study of the progress of one pupil, describing with exemplification the strategies adopted to help him as he drafted and re-drafted his work.

In our final chapter we attempt to draw some valid conclusions from our work and discuss its implications for teachers of

English involved in current developments in Scotland as a result of the Munn-Dunning development programme.

References

1. Mills, Roger *A comprehensive education 1965-1975* London: Centerprise Trust Ltd., 1978

2. "Look, image, cover, write." See, for example, Cottrell, G. in Wade, B. and Wedell, K. (eds). *Spelling: task and learner* University of Birmingham 1974 (Educational Review Occasional Publication No. 5) or Moorhouse, C. *Helping adults to spell* Adult Literacy Resource Agency 1977 p.16

APPENDIX NINE

CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to help you to produce the best writing that you can.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY: THE FIRST DAY AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

SUBJECT	1. Describe how you felt and what happened to you on your first day at St Mungo's High School. Begin by describing how you arrived at the school on that first day then describe one or more things which happened. (You could mention how the school looked to you; the people you met and what you had to do.) You could finish your composition by describing your journey home.
POINT OF VIEW	2. Write your composition from your own point of view, keeping in mind that you are writing for 10-11 year-olds to help them when they come to school for the first time.
REGISTER	3. Try to write about school so that primary 7 pupils will understand what you mean. Choose your words carefully and use appropriate grammar.
ORGANISATION	4. You should always try to organise your sentences into paragraphs. Your writing should be at least 80 words long.
MECHANICS	5. Your spelling should be as careful as possible. Take care too, that your punctuation is clear, especially at the beginning and end of sentences. Your handwriting must be clear enough so that your reader will be able to understand it without having to ask you what you mean.

APPENDIX TEN

From: A Comprehensive Education by Roger Mills

"A tearless farewell from Primary School and a long, hot six weeks holiday culminating in a sleepless last night had resulted in my sitting outside the administrative offices of Effingham Road Comprehensive School. Actually, due to a previously booked holiday I missed the first week at Effingham Road and forever after wondered if I'd missed some vital explanation during that week - some single phrase or few words which had made everything clear and given some meaning and reason to the next five years I would spend here.

All I had actually missed was a guided tour on the first day. The first year boys without the hindrance of the other years who started the next day were shown the wonders of the premises. But I had missed out on that tour and it was three years before I knew my way about the school.

Now I was alone with my brand new briefcase empty, save for the fountain pen. There was no group of boys to hide behind, no friends to share my worries with.

The thing that struck me most on that first day was the newness of everything: everything steel and glass, everything white and clean. They had none of the cosiness of my primary classroom with its rabbits at the back and painted pictures on the wall.

Lesson changes here were hustle and bustle: aggressive shoulders pushing in the corridors and bodies jostling on the stairs.

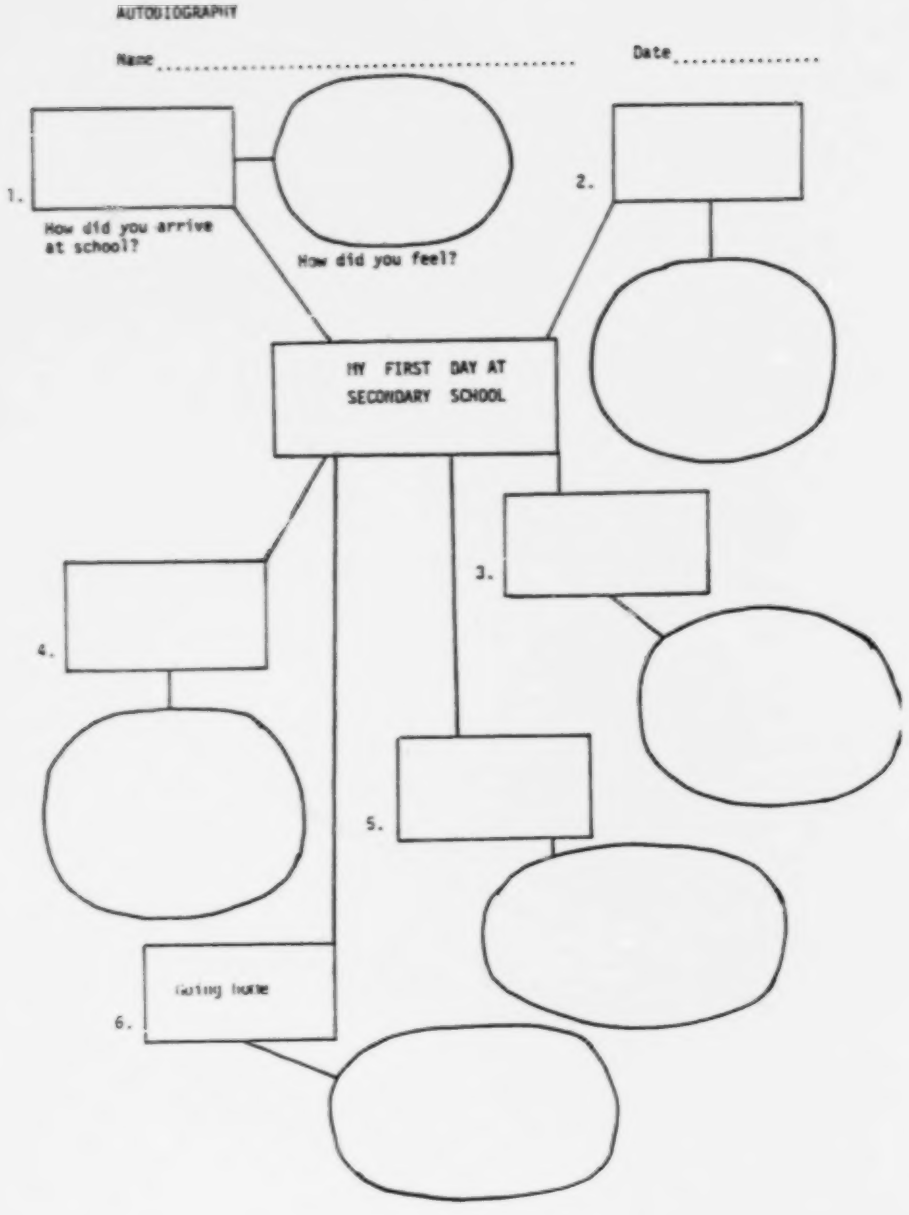
It was a very long day: the way it always is when you're in totally new surroundings and your mind doesn't get a chance to slip into a routine.

I arrived home, legs aching, it was over a mile's walk. My arms ached too, my bag full of fat, hard-backed books with torn pages.

A new worry was stirring in my mind: all that homework! Homework kept you from playing in the streets or watching television.

But I did watch television that evening on the first day. On a variety show a comedian told a joke about the little boy after his first day at Primary School. His mother said, "Now we're not going to have all that crying and screaming when you go tomorrow, are we?" And he said, "You don't mean I have to go again, do you?"

APPENDIX ELEVEN



APPENDIX TWELVE

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROFILE

	YES	NO	COMMENT
Subject			
Described events of first day			
Mentioned at least three elements			
Included reflection on feelings			
Point of View			
Persona correct			
Purpose correct			
Register			
Vocabulary suitable			
Grammar appropriate			
Meaning accessible			
Organisation			
Structured			
Paragraphed appropriately			
Minimum of 80 words			
Mechanics			
Spelling 95% accurate			
Punctuation (especially sentence boundaries) appropriate			
Handwriting legible			

APPENDIX THIRTEEN

Caroline My First Day at Secondary School

It was my first day at a new school and I felt very lonely, not making new friends. In fact I had no friends to share my many worries with. My old friends were all too busy with their creative dance lessons and their new friends to worry about me. I was now on my own.

The new school was enormous with strange surroundings. I felt very lost. I felt Very scared and left out of things. I could not see my old friends as much as when I was back in primary school, then we were together as much as I would want. All my friends deserted me. I, now left all alone, was desperate for new friends. I even got bullied and bossed about by some of the older years including some in my class and most of the seniors.

On our very first day we did a tour around the school, with the help of our new guidance teacher. We got a tour around most of the subject classes, and I felt really nervous. We were even told who our new teachers were going to be.

My new regarstration teacher was Mr --- who was also to be our maths teacher for some time later in the year.

We got told the break-times of the day, e.g. morning-break and the lunch-break. Our morning-break started at 10.40 am and finished at 10.55 am. We even got shown our new toilets, which were situated just outside the music-block, which was the next one (building) on the Assembly-block.

Before we went to our Registration-classes we got separated into different sections into different houses; e.g. Columba, Ninian, Aidan, Margaret, and my house was Columba, and we were told to go to our separate Reg-rooms, where there was one for each house. Mr --- was my Regarstration teacher's name. For the rest of the morning we were to stay there.

In class, we got our new home-work diaries and our teacher told us all our facts and things of importance all about our new teachers and new subjects.

All of the morning we stayed in our Registration classes but at lunchtime, which started at 12.55 and which finished 1.55 pm, we were told where the dining-hall was, and of where to go including about the snacks-place. There I met and sat beside some people from my class. As soon as lunch was over we were all told to go to our normal classes for the rest of the afternoon.

For my first subject of the afternoon I got lost about the school. I asked principal-teachers for help but they were all too busy for to be ask by me. I also asked older years - the seniors of 4th, 5th and 6th year where I am to go; they normally gave me a false answer and then they wrongly directed me to my classes.

I felt rather embarrassed, lonely, sad, and lost, until I met up with a prefect, who saved the day. She led me to the right class at last. On entering my subject class-room I get rather embarrassed as the situation has worsened of having to tell the teacher "that I was lost". Then I sat down on my chair, to sit at ease. It was one of my Maths Subjects. The afternoon went like a flash and now it was home-time.

For most of my first-year and the first-day, I just walked home after school had finnished and I did not know that there were any buses that could take me home, so I just walked home with Helen my big-sister, who was a prefect at this school; on towards the town and back to my house.

Denis My First Day at Secondary School

The bus arrived at the school. I got of and walked into the school. I followed people who new where to go. We asked a prefect what class to go to and me and my friend were taken to our Registration class. We were in that class from 10 past 9 to 20 past 11, then I started the journey of where to go.

The school looked different from my primary much bigger lot more classrooms and a lot more pupils. I never met any friends on my first day because I went about with my friends from my last school who came up to the school.

I felt very nervous on my first day and all shaky. The school was totaly different.

It was much larger than I expected and I never new where to go. It was like a maize. You would go up one side of the stairs then down the other side then find yourself back where you started. It took some time to get used to the way you went about the school.

It was great when the bell went at 5 to 4 pm. The felling was great going home after a long day of being lost and nervous noing that you had to go back the next day didn't bother you so much as long as you got over the first day. As the days went by I started to get used to everything and got back to normal. I started to talk to other people. I got used to the school after about 2 or 3 weeks. That was just me nowing what

classes to go to.

I picked good subjects well subjects not to hard. I put down Geography and did not get it. I got Economics instead. I don't like Economics.

At my primary school you did not need to move out of the classroom you were in the same class all the time.

When I got into the 1st and 2nd year it was'nt much different. We had about 5 different teachers apart from when we got metal work and art we went over to the Academy that was just over the road.

Julie My First Day at Secondary School

A kind of funny felling came to me as I walk into my new school yard at the front, my friends were waiting on me and they were all round each other. I went over and we all talked about the bigness of the school and how we would find our way about; and which classes we would be in; and if we would be inbeside each other or with strangers or not.

The bell had gone and we went inside and down a big corridor and into this big area which was called the "old foyer".

The old foyer is like a lobby it leads into different places. I felt small compared to all the cold brick walls, I thought that the walls would have been painted brighter and pictures on the walls but they were very dull.

We got all told to go to the assembly hall, so we went through the big doors and down the corridor and then came to the assembly hall.

We got shown to a seat. Then we got told to stand because the assistant head was coming in we were all stand when she came in then she told us to sit down again.

She started talking to us about the school and the classes and what they expected of us all and why the rector was not there to welcome us to our new school, and the rules yo where to keep and all about our guidance teachers.

I felt like I was getting inrolled for the army, getting all the instructions, I was looking about all the same uniforms everybody was in green and yellow and all new with shiny buttons and new bags and all smart some even got there hair cut for the first day. Then the bit came I was dreading the classes I would be in; if I would be in with friends or not but my class came I

was in 1C, with one of my classmates from primary school, that was a releaf.

After we got told about our classes we had to go to the class with our form teacher Mr --- he was a maths teacher. And we sat and he told us things about the school and he gave us our homework deurys and our timetable to copy out and told us we had to report to him in the morning a 9.10 and start lessons at 9.20.

The bell had gone and we were to go for something to eat. I met my friends and we when for somethink to eat we had snacks the snacks were great. I had a chicken pie and a plate of tomato soup and orange juice. After snacks we went to the tuck shop there was a very good selection and after that we just sat on the wall outside and talked about the school. Then the bell went and we went into our first lesson.

It was home time before I knew it I had three jotters from the three lessons I had been to and three tex books and my dairy my bag was not heavy. I walk home with my friends it was a long way compared with walking from my primary to the house it took me from 3.55 to 4.30 to get home but I did not mind at least I got home. I was tired after the first day. But I enjoyed it.

John <u>My First Day at Secondary School</u>

As I woke up in the morning I sighed because it was to be my first day at secondary school. I looked out of the window and saw children up very early in their new school uniforms and feeling very proud of themselves. I quickly washed and put on my new school uniform, and went downstairs for my breakfast.

As I was walking to the bus stop I thought to myself, what would the bullies be like or is it just a rumour to make the newcomers scared of what is in store for them? The bigger pupils of the school tell you that they will duck you in the toilet. When I got the bus stop the --- twins had their new school uniforms on as well because it was their first day at secondary school as well.

When the bus came there were other children in new school uniforms starting primary and secondary school. When we got to the school it looked huge compared with my primary school. As we entered the school the air was buzzing with excited children, who just couldn't wait for school to start. When we got into the Assembly Hall there was a sea of green blazers and jumpers. We were in the Assembly Hall for the first three periods in the morning. A teacher started to talk to us about the school and what goes on in the different buildings. She talked to us

about the school rule and were the heads of the different departments.

After assembly we were told who was our registration teacher and we were shown where our classes were. When we got to the class Mr --- our registration told us things about the school and we had to write our timetable out and this would be our subjects for the rest of the year.

We stayed at registration for two periods then we went to get our dinner.

Since it was our first day we were allowed to go to dinners before the rest of the school. Myself and Neale --- were first in for snacks, he was a tall boy with curly hair. For the rest of our dinner hour we went about the school trying to find different rooms, and getting to know the school better.

After dinner we had to go back to normal timetable and this meant that I had to go to Maths with Mr --- who is no longer at the school. Before I came to the school I thought that the teachers would be like tyrants and very strict but I found them very friendly and helpful.

Lesson changing was great because it gave you the chance to get a breath of fresh air and a chance to talk to your friends.

School finished half an hour more than the primary used to finish at.

The day dragged on and it was quite boring because all the teachers did was take our names and give us new text books and introduce themselves.

When the bell went at four o'clock I was very relieved to be going home because the first day is always the worst.

The next thing I noticed about the school was when I went to get the bus home at ----- we lined up in a sensible queue but the ---- pupils went on their buses as a rabble and it's a wonder nobody got hurt.

I got no homework that night but I knew when I got it it would be very hard and it would be alot more than I was used to at primary school.

VIII CONCLUSION

In our introductory chapter we identified three main aims in the writing of our report which we believe have been realised in the accounts and discussion that followed:

(i) In Chapters Four and Five we have presented critical accounts of the rationale that came to underpin the developmental work of the project as regards the conceptualisation of the teaching of writing in the secondary school classroom. This included an analysis of the nature of skills in writing and a discussion of the model of classroom practice - strategies for teaching and learning and procedures for formative and summative assessment - which was adopted by the research team. We believe that this rationale is an important and distinctive feature of our work.

(ii) In Chapters Six and Seven we have provided exemplification and critical discussion of the developmental work which was implemented in different classrooms and was predicated upon the above rationale. Chapters Two and Three also presented a discussion of the results of initial exploratory interviews with teachers concerning the nature of their existing professional practice in this field and periods of observation of our main collaborating teachers at work in their own classrooms.

(iii) Throughout the report we have commented upon some of the professional issues which arose in the course of our work in designing and implementing writing tasks in the context of trial courses in English at Foundation Level.

Our report has provided evidence of the flexible, adaptive approach we have adopted in responding to classroom events and to the advice and professional practice of our

collaborating teachers; our classroom strategies and procedures were developed and refined in the light of experience gained in the classroom. We believe our research strategy was successful; an initial period of inquiry, observation and discussion was followed by phases of action and development in each of our three classrooms; these phases were punctuated in turn by further reflection and discussion as part of a continuing cycle of events. The overall aim of our work has been to ensure that pupils make effective progress in mastering skills in writing. In seeking to realise this aim we have ensured that the rationale we developed took account of teachers' own professed classroom practices in this field and the ways in which our small group of collaborating teachers actually planned and managed their work in their own classrooms. Our investigation, therefore, has been essentially collaborative in nature throughout; the main focus of our development work has been to share with our teachers the testing of our theories, to negotiate appropriate changes in their professional practice and to explore with them the implications of new ways of thinking about their objectives in setting and managing writing tasks in the classroom.

We believe that this also has been an important feature of our work. We have not theorized or developed strategies or materials in isolation or by means of limited or changing contacts with a variety of teachers; the development of our thinking and the procedures and strategies we eventually advocate have been influenced throughout the project by the arguments, responses and professional practice of a group of experienced teachers and have been tested and explored in continuing classroom contexts that have been as "normal" as possible, given the abnormality that being engaged in a curriculum development project inevitably brings.

However, in this concluding chapter we plan to return to professional issues connected with the implementation of our work in the classroom rather than to issues of research methodology; a separate paper offering a summative critique of the research methods employed in the project is available for those with a particular interest in this area (see Preface).

Our Project was designed to be small in scale and exploratory in nature; we have worked in three schools only with a small group of experienced teachers and their pupils. Inevitably both teachers and pupils have been the focus of our attention and we would not wish to seek to apply to other educational contexts without qualification or reservation the procedures for planning, teaching and assessing that we have been investigating in our trial classrooms. However, it seems appropriate in this final chapter to offer a concise summary of what we believe has been achieved in the course of the project's work and to address ourselves briefly to three important questions:

- What is the nature and extent of any success in developing pupils' writing skills achieved as a result of the work of the project?
- If some success is apparent, what new professional demands were made of our collaborating teachers in order to achieve success?
- If some success is apparent, what would the implications be if our work were to be developed further in Scottish secondary schools?

(a) <u>How successful was the project's approach to the teaching of writing?</u>

Although the question of success in implementing the project's rationale in the teaching of writing is an essential one, it is not possible to answer it simply or definitively. It is important to restate that our collaborating teachers were experienced and successful practitioners and that they were

supported by the presence of the researcher in their classrooms: the pupils were taught in small classes and they were aware that they were a focus of our attention. As teacher A commented at the conclusion of our work (in interview): "I think they (the pupils) were quite flattered and they liked all the attention." Any evaluation of our work, therefore, is tentative and necessarily lacking in objectivity. None the less we believe it is important to attempt a dispassionate appraisal based on the researcher's own perception of events in each classroom, on concluding interviews and on-going informal discussions with collaborating teachers, and on the scrutiny of the scripts produced by pupils in the course of classroom work. The schedule for the concluding interviews can be found at the conclusion of this chapter as Appendix Fourteen.*

In the later stages of the project (described in detail in the previous chapter) pupils did appear to make clear progress towards success as judged by the criteria laid down by the teacher at the outset of the writing task and they appeared to be positively motivated by such success in the course of drafting and redrafting their written work; both researcher and classroom teachers were impressed by the progress made by pupils and their sense of involvement in the tasks - this was especially true of some pupils. In some cases the amount of progress made by individuals and the degree of application they showed surprised and impressed the classroom teacher; in no case did a pupil produce written work that was clearly inferior to his/her "normal" achievement in writing. At the same time we accept that the dominant focus of our work has been the teacher's perception of classroom events, on the teacher's planning and classroom methodology rather than on the pupil's perspective. It is important to accept that a pupil's intrinsic motivation in a task and his/her sense of satisfaction in completing it may be as (or more) important for achieving eventual success than any planning of work, strategies for improvement or assessment procedures engaged in by the teacher.

* see page 208

(b) Professional demands made of collaborating teachers

In order to achieve this degree of apparent interest and success considerable demands were made of our collaborating teachers. These demands involved changes in their procedures for planning work so that one writing task (supported by a variety of other language activities) became the main objective for a unit of classroom work and an essential focus for both formative and summative assessment. As one of the teachers commented, in retrospect he had had to see ensuing lessons clearly in terms of these stated objectives, saying to himself and the pupils "That's the successful bit... that's what we want to be able to do at the end." (Teacher B: final interview.) Planning consequently required teachers to produce a clear statement of their criteria for judging pupils' success in completing the main writing task and to use some kind of model to exemplify success. Classroom implementation involved a high degree of flexible management on the part of the teacher; as a result pupils could work on their own or in small groups at different speeds, discussing their progress with the teacher or with each other as they produced successive drafts of their work. In the course of these formative discussions (and to some extent at the "priming" stage also) the teacher needed to possess a professional repertoire of different kinds of teaching strategy to help pupils to overcome problems (both in the short and long term) diagnosed in formative assessment interviews or correction outwith the classroom. Only one of our main collaborating teachers (Teacher A) experienced no difficulty in organizing her pupils in the classroom in this way because it was her habitual practice. Teacher B, for example, commented in the final interview on the difficulties he was still experiencing in adapting to this style of class management and stressed the importance of pupils learning and accepting the "ground rules" for this kind of classroom approach to teaching and learning:

.....then I gave them (pupils in a different class) another exercise and in this case I gave them a clear checklist....well I thought it was clear anyway....which had related to the different levels of criteria.....and they came in today and they milled about and they said "What are we going to do?" and "Will I redraft this?" and so on....and it was all total disaster.....a mess.....Now clearly there's something.....I've missed something there..... I haven't trained them properly.....so am, what I learned from work with you is fine in the abstract, you know, in terms of planning and approach.... and I'm sure it's useful....good stuff....but the actual management of it....I'm still left with big problems....which are partly mine and partly to do with some of the pupils.

There is no doubt either that the procedures we developed for planning a unit of classroom work were also time-consuming and that the procedures for implementing it were initially taxing in terms of application and concentration:

...but in terms of time.....in terms of the amount of preparation, it would be very difficult to do it all at the one time for all classes.....

Teacher C: final interview

We have demonstrated in our work how criterion-referenced assessment procedures can be developed from existing professional practice in the teaching of English in Scotland and be integrated into a system of continuous assessment. Although the context of our work has been the teaching of writing at Foundation level, its implications are clearly much wider. We have shown, too, that criterion-referencing does not relate to the stages of formative and summative assessment alone, but must also involve as an essential element planning at the pre-writing stage so that a criterion-referenced approach becomes integrated into the total sequence of teaching and learning for both teacher and pupil.

Criterion-referenced assessment, we have argued, should not be conceptualised as a summative activity alone involving only retrospective judgements about pupils' achievements and certification. Commitment to criterion-referenced procedures will necessarily influence a teacher's whole approach to the

planning of work and to classroom methodology, and will affect a teacher's conception of his/her professional role. We believe that it is important not to underestimate the difficulties involved for the individual teacher in achieving this shift of perspective.

(c) What are the implications for implementing the rationale on a wider scale?

For most teachers the planning and teaching procedures we have developed will require, we believe, important and sometimes fundamental changes in professional thinking, planning and classroom practice. Our main collaborating teachers also agreed (and we would concur) that an understanding of the rationale underpinning our work is essential to effective classroom implementation. For teachers simply to accept some of our procedures and seek to graft them to existing practice without reflection could, we believe, lead to unfortunate results.

"Pressure of time" - a frequently expressed problem for our collaborating teachers - is clearly an important factor for consideration. At present responsibility for course construction at Foundation (and other) levels in English rests with an individual teacher or department; planning and preparation of units of work account for a significant amount of a teacher's professional time. To increase the demands already being made on teachers in this field by asking them to add their own written checklist of the criteria for success on a main language task and formative profiles of the kind we have developed for every key task will appear to many readers to be unrealistic.

If, however, the procedures we have explored could be demonstrated to make more effective use of a teacher's professional contact-time with pupils in the classroom (which it is not possible to do with any confidence as a result of the present project), it might appear reasonable to investigate further the possible advantages of a policy involving a greater element of devolved or mediated planning of courses to relieve teachers of some of this burden.

Such a development could initially be on a small, exploratory scale and regionally based rather than national in dimension; it would involve experienced teachers working in collaboration with members of the local authority advisory service, the colleges of education and/or the universities. We accept that this will be an emotive issue for many teachers of English but believe the issue is worth further exploration none the less.

Although we have argued that there are dangers in teachers attempting to graft some of the procedures we have developed on to existing thinking and professional practice, we have clearly striven to ensure that the procedures we advocate can develop effectively from existing practices and to allow some measure of flexibility so that they can be adapted to accommodate differences in goals and in individual teaching styles. The Joint Working Party Report (1983)[1] describes and discusses the currently accepted "interactive model" of English teaching and notes that the crux of this model is that "the teacher has to be ready to respond to pupils who, set the same goals, will acquire language skills at different levels of sophistication and at different rates."

We believe that teachers of English can accept the principles of the interactive model and our own rationale without inevitable conflict, but in following our own procedures they would necessarily need to be more explicit about what their pupils would be seeking to achieve, probably less ambitious and more limited in the objectives they set and almost certainly more systematic in working towards these objectives than is at present the case. Such changes will not be accepted by all teachers of English as desirable, even if they can be demonstrated to be feasible in terms of planning and management, and effective in terms of pupils' improved performance. Clearly, though, the rationale and procedures we have explored can be developed further; they can be applied to language tasks other than those in the written mode and with pupils other than those following courses at Foundation Level. We would agree with Teacher B that such

further exploration and development could in the long term prove worthwhile:

> *.....for a long time I've felt that as English teachers we were far too vague.....you know, we gave pupils kind of vague instructions and if they could work out what we really wanted, behind that as it were, they got bonus marks.....I'd the notion of being able to say to pupils, "Right now what you must do are the following things....you could also consider doing these and then there are these beyond it, as it were.....but if you do the first lot you pass.....you've done it.....you've been successful....." and then beginning to assess them on what they've done.....I think that's a huge step.....so that they know what they're doing and they see how it all fits in..... It's a lot of work and in some ways it narrows the course.... There will still be room for stuff which is done just for fun or kind of extensions of that..... it doesn't all have to be done that way.....but to have a course which will be a departmental course agreed upon, where you can assure yourself, your Board of Management, parents, pupils, that if you follow a four-year course with this school, then at this level you will have done the following and you will be able to do the following.....at this level... I think that's a.....I think that's a marvellous thing.*
>
> Teacher B: final interview

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APPENDIX FOURTEEN

FINAL INTERVIEW SCHEME

Lead in: What has it been like for you personally to participate in the project?

1. Did procedures work for teachers?
   1. a) What comments would you make in retrospect on the strengths and weaknesses of the procedures adopted?
      e.g. planning; setting up; checklist; activities during writing; formative assessment; drafting strategies

2. Did procedures work for pupils?
   2. a) What observations would you make about your pupils' progress during the project's work?
   b) What were your perceptions about the pupils' motivation in the units of work?

3. Are the procedures feasible?
   3. a) Did you discuss what we've been doing with colleagues?
   b) How did they react?
   c) Did they try any of the strategies?
      e.g. for formative assessment
   d) Did what we do have any influence on what you are currently doing with your Foundation/other classes?

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